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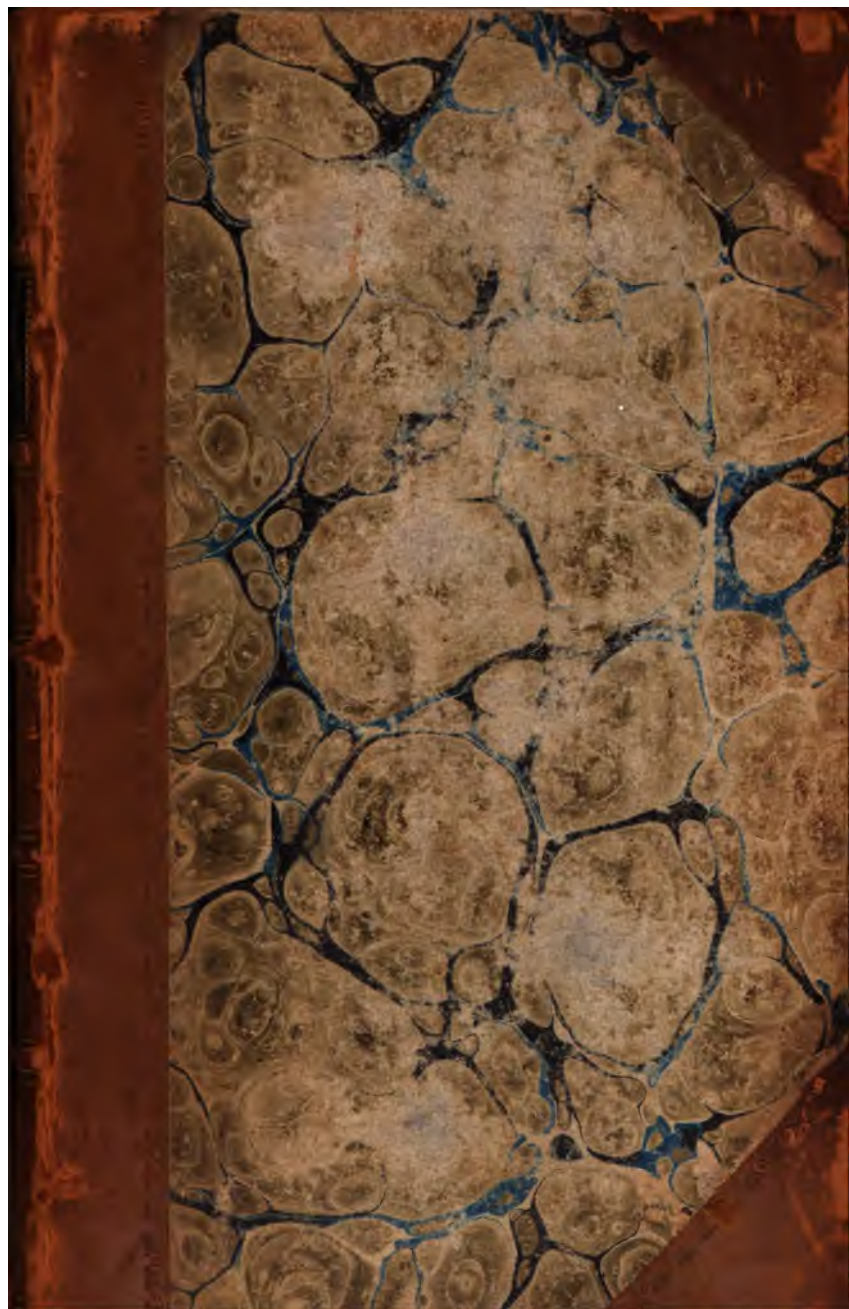
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✓ L.B. 1872.

THE BOOK,

OF A CHRISTMAS
OLD COURT.

AUTHOR OF

YOU LIKE IT.

more in country places than for a
evening to sit round the fire and

Brun's Popular Antiquities.

LONDON:
ED FOR J. A. HESSEY,
9, FLEET-STREET.

1828.

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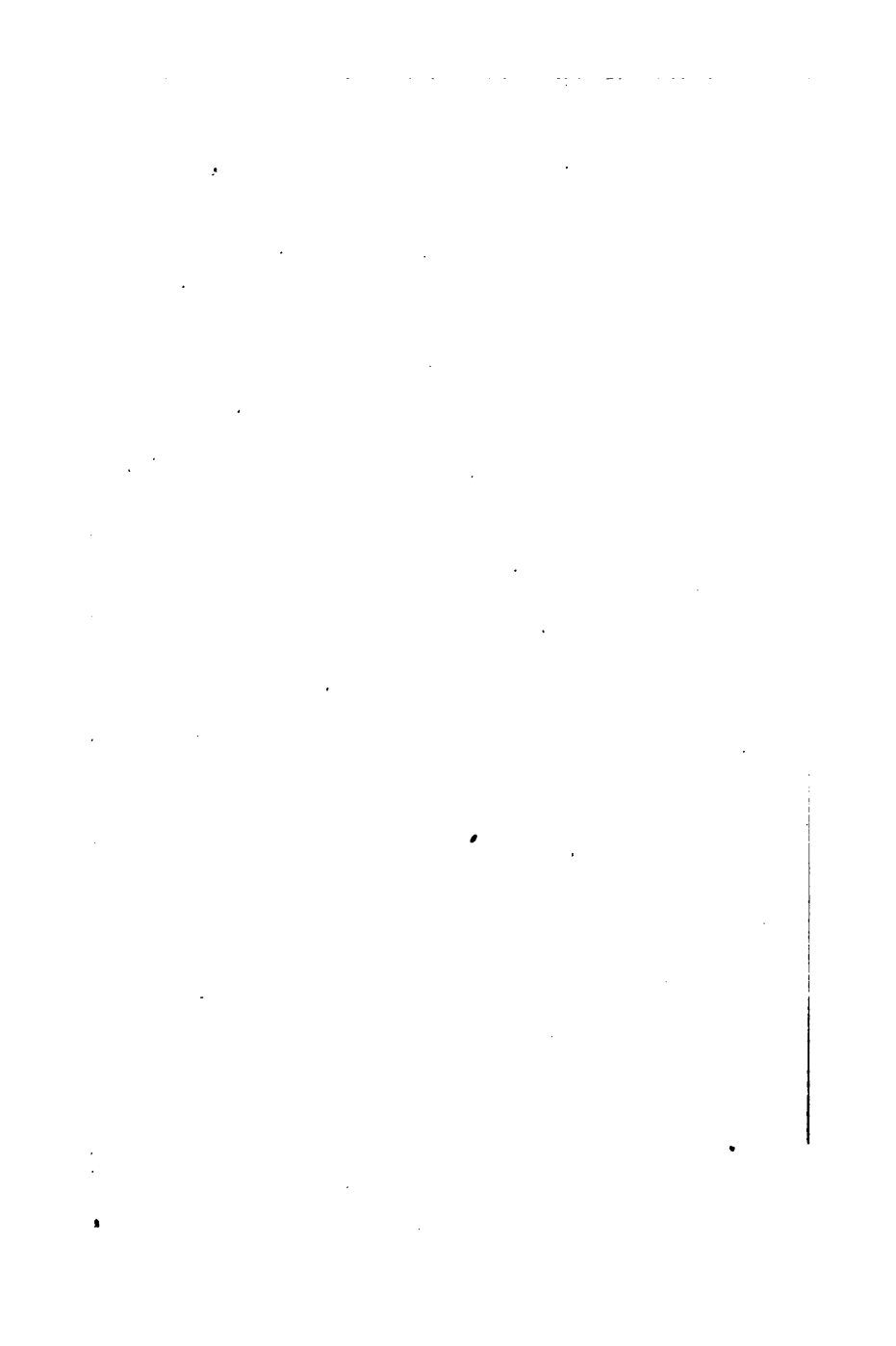


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George Grukhanić Sr.

Old Court.

Manuscript received by the Editor July 1, 1994

A *v. S.H. 1878.*

FIRESIDE BOOK,

OR

THE ACCOUNT OF A CHRISTMAS
SPENT AT OLD COURT.

BY THE AUTHOR OF
MAY YOU LIKE IT.

"Nothing is commoner in country places than for a whole family in a winter's evening to sit round the fire and tell stories."

Brand's Popular Antiquities.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR J. A. HESSEY,
93, FLEET-STREET.

1828.

812.



LONDON:
PRINTED BY THOMAS DAVISON, WHITEFRIARS.

TO
MY SISTERS,
FANNY AND CHARLOTTE,
THIS LITTLE BOOK
IS DEDICATED,
WITH SINCERE AFFECTION,
BY THE FRIEND AND COMPANION
OF THEIR EARLY YEARS.

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812.



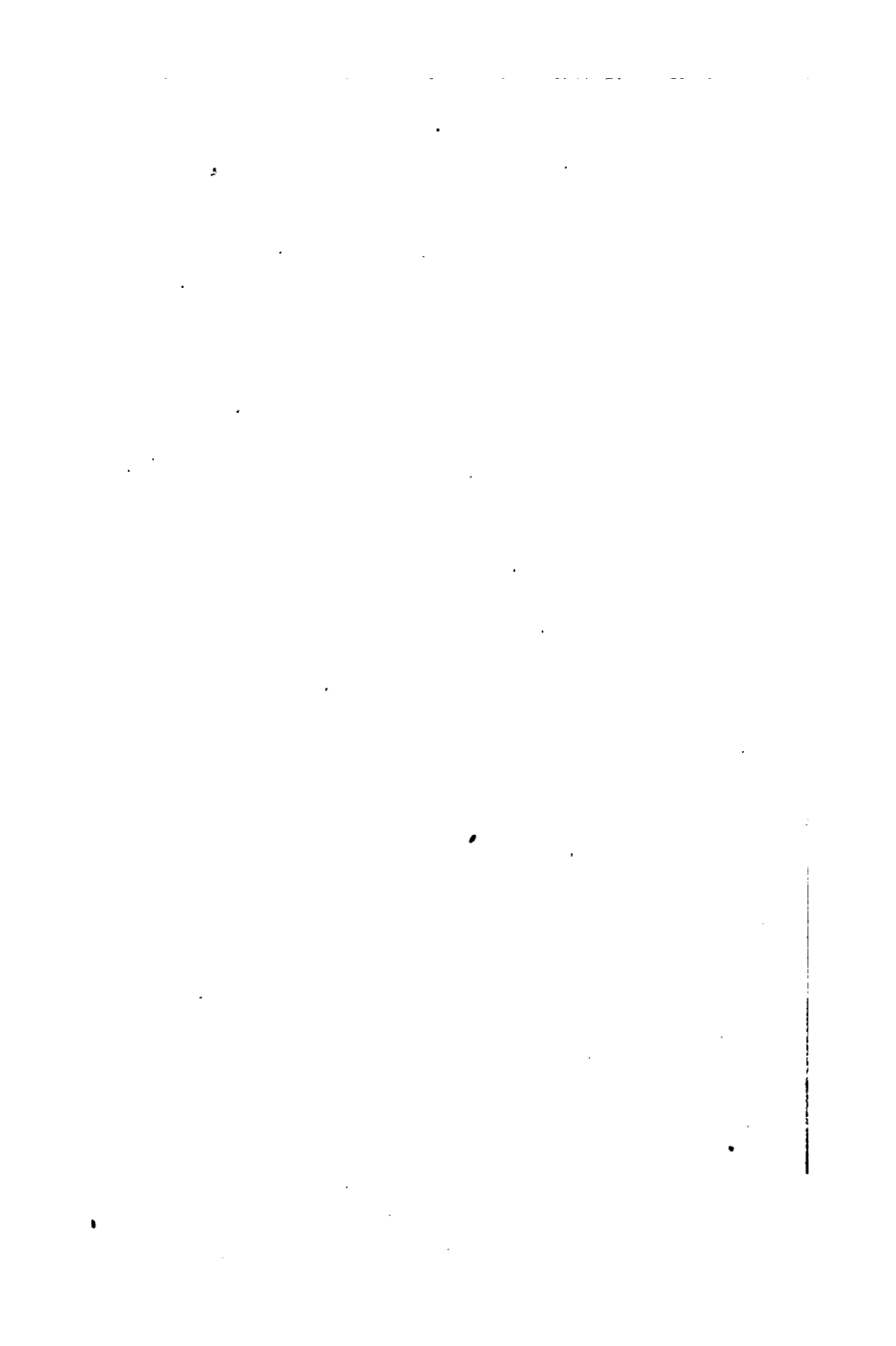
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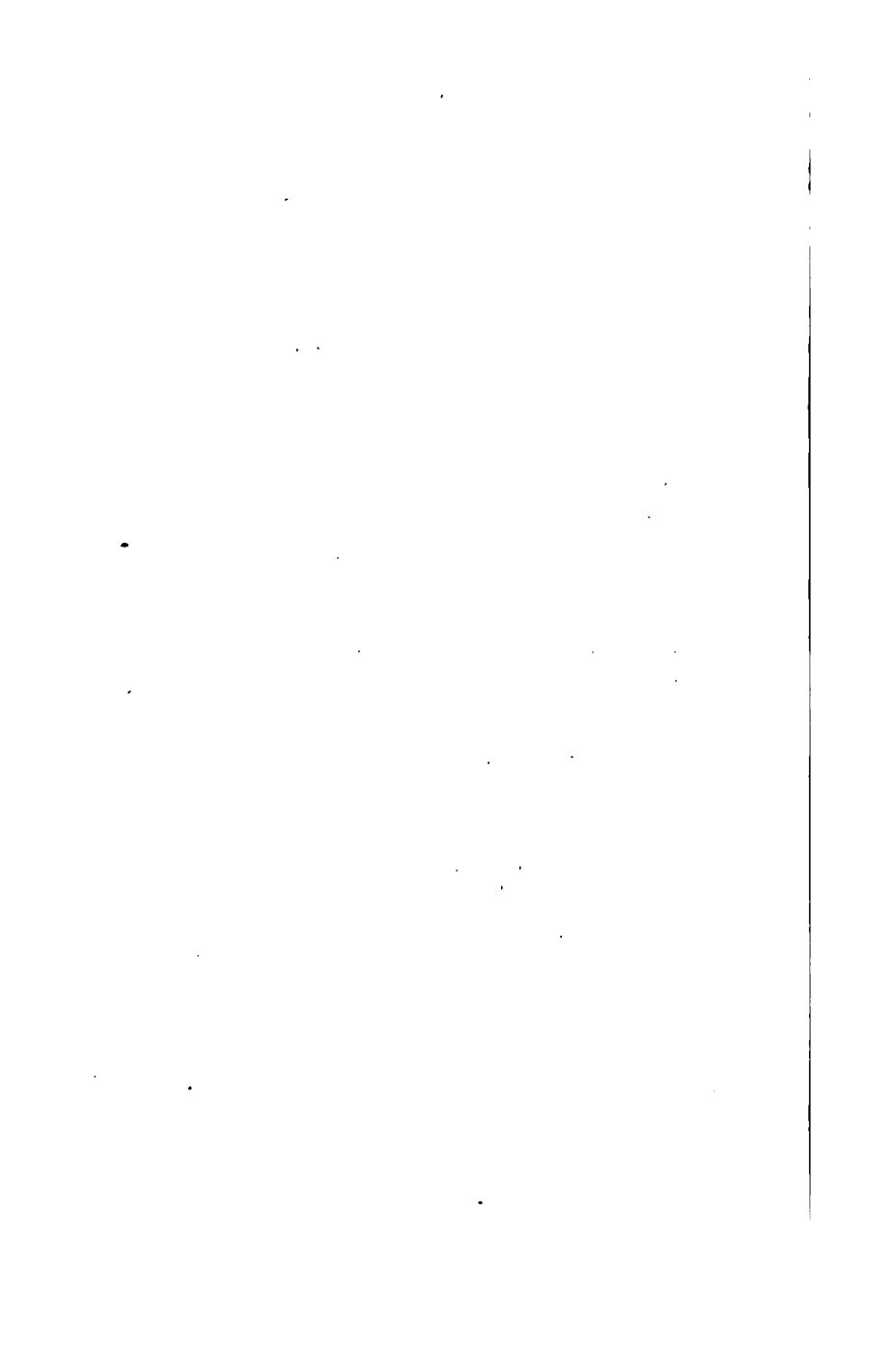






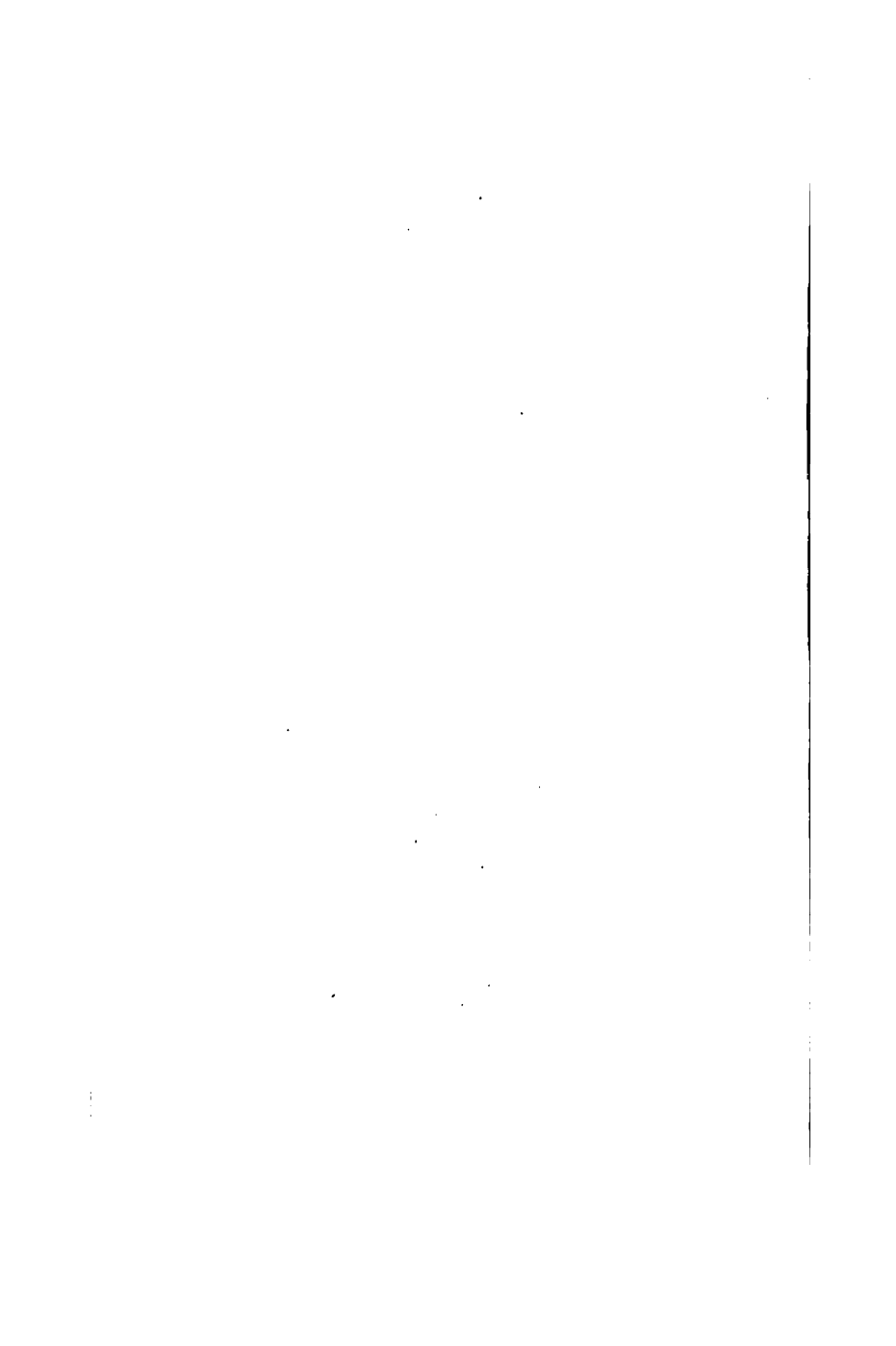






INTRODUCTION TO OLD COURT.

'Tis the old and stately seat
Of an old and noble race;
Honest heart and open hand,
Single mind and manners bland,
Linger in the ancient place,
Choosing here their calm retreat.
Be you lord or rustic hind,
Here a welcome you may find;
Be you grave, or be you gay,
Come, and go; or come, and stay;
Be it June or Christmas tide,
Or any other month beside,
Be your visit long or short,
Welcome, welcome, to Old Court.
Only in one shameful case
Here you must not show your face—
False to God, to man untrue,
Hence! the doors are closed on you.



INTRODUCTION TO OLD COURT.

1709.

Two letters were laid before the knight. "This from my son Harry," he said, taking up one of them. "The other must be read first, however." (His eye had glanced upon the hand-writing of his firstborn, Marmaduke.) "Hey! Mistress Amabel," he cried, after a rustling of paper, and making many exclamations, as his custom often was; "here's a fine piece of business!"

"No bad news, I hope," said the old lady.

"Bad news, no!—I mean, yes; or rather no and yes together. First of all, here's Marmaduke's letter, with a long story about attachment, and my approval, and a girl without a groat; and how certain he is that you, and I, and little Gracey there, will love her. 'Pshaw, the boy's a fool! I hate your love matches, and your poor beauties."

"Are you quite sure of that, father?" whispered his daughter Grace, who had stolen round to

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her father's side, and who, as soon as she caught his eye, turned a sidelong glance to the portrait of one who had been very poor and very beautiful—her own mother. "Are you quite sure of that?" and as she spoke, she half hung her head, and looked very archly and very smilingly full in her father's face. There was a little art in the girl's look, and she would not have cared to confess it; yet it was natural with her, for she had caught it of her own mother. She knew its potency, and she knew that her father would take her in his arms and kiss her fondly. She might have guessed that, just then, any smile from her would charm her father; for, poor girl! she had smiled very seldom of late. Her eyes had lost half their brightness, and her soft cheek was very, very pale. But this is not the time to tell her story.

"That child's as like her mother as she can stare," said the old man, as he looked at Grace, then intently perusing her brother's letter, which she had quietly taken, without asking, from his hand.

"Not stare, father, if you please, that's not quite the word." She looked up and smiled again. "I hope I don't stare. I believe you have turned over your once happy art of speaking to a lady's ear to Marmaduke. Dear fellow! how well he writes! This Lucy of his must be a sweet creature; I like

every thing about her; at least every thing he says. And what a pretty name!—Lucy! my favourite name!”

“But where is Harry’s letter?” said the knight; “I had it in my hand but a minute ago. Have you taken Harry’s letter?” he asked; for Grace had turned again to her elder brother’s, and had not heard his first inquiry.

“Did you speak, father? what did you say?—Have I taken Harry’s letter? to be sure, I have;” and she showed it under the letter she was reading.

“Ah, well!” replied the old knight, sitting down, satisfied that the letter was found. “Read it aloud to your aunt and me—read the good news of the morning.”

“Good news! what can it be, if, after Marmaduke’s good news, this news of Harry is, by way of distinction, to be called the good news? Well, aunt, I’m sure you are impatient to hear, so I’ll begin:

Paris, May 3d, 1709.

“‘HONOURED FATHER,

“‘I date my letter from Paris, though I have already taken a small chateau near Versailles. I have much to tell you, much to explain, but I hope to explain all to your perfect satisfaction. I will begin my narrative:—

“‘Not many weeks ago I had an unexpected

meeting with Mr. Joscelyn, who behaved so ill to my poor sister Grace."

Grace could not get out half the words; the paper fluttered in her hand, and her lip quivered with agitation. "Oh Harry!" she cried, in a tone of deep distress—"and he promised me!"—

"Give me the letter, my darling," said the old knight. "I forgot that part; but don't be frightened, nothing that you dread has happened: give me the letter."

"No, no, dear father! I'm very silly; but I can hardly help it; I did not expect the name just then, that's all. How very warm it is!" she said, and pushed back her beautiful hair, now hanging over a cheek crimsoned with emotion.

"With Mr. Joscelyn,"—she continued, and running over with her eye the few words that followed,—"'and his wife!'"—

"He is married, then!" Another deeper blush spread over her whole face. "I'm very glad! For his wife's sake, that impetuous Harry would, I hope, avoid him, and not wound her feelings as well as mine."

"Go on reading, Gracey," said the knight.

"And his wife and sister. Of course I did not go near them; but the next day I met one of the party again—the sister, the Lady Clarice Joscelyn: she was with her mother at Lord N's. To my

INTRODUCTION TO OLD COURT. 9

astonishment, the mother and daughter begged an introduction to me, and treated me with the most marked attention. The former took an opportunity of assuring me with what displeasure she had regarded her son's conduct, and spoke in high terms of the character given by every one to my darling sister. All this was far from displeasing to me: but to make the matter short (as I am unexpectedly called away, and must refer you to a letter I will write to-morrow for more particulars), I found the Lady Clarice charming; and as I saw she thought me a very pretty fellow, I persuaded her and the countess her mother to let the brother go on to Rome, where they had all intended to winter, without them. The day after Mr. Joscelyn's departure beheld me the husband, the very happy husband, of my dear little Clarice.' Here the letter broke off abruptly with—"your dutiful son,

"HARRY FAIRFAX."

The nine days allowed by the world for wonder when good sober persons have strange news brought to them, had not passed away;—I believe 'twas the evening of the eighth day after the letter of the madcap Harry, so he was sometimes called, had been received: Mistress Amabel was fidgeting about the hall, expressing aloud her concern and vexation that her brother, who had been complain-

ing of rheumatism, should remain out after the sun had set, and the dews fallen; and sometimes stepping up into the recess of the oriel window, where Grace was sitting at her embroidery frame, and hinting her astonishment how young people could ruin their eyes as they did, when there was not light enough to distinguish the colour of the silken thread they worked with; not forgetting, between whiles, to drop an occasional sharp word into the ears of old Robin, the slow-moving, slow-handed butler, who was leisurely laying out the supper-table in the middle of the hall. The knight still lingered on his evening ride. Grace looked up and smiled, and promised only to finish one little rosebud, but still remained at her frame, and was even caught beginning a sprig of myrtle. Old Robin put all the knives on the left-hand, and all the forks on the right, and stumbled over the plate-basket and cut his shin, owing, as Mistress Amabel declared, to his own obstinacy in not bringing a light, as she had desired, and his own awkwardness in not looking before him. The plate-basket stood in a dark corner of the hall, whither, *entre nous*, the officious old lady had removed it when the old man had been absent for a few minutes.

These several series of provocations had, by their continuance, worked the aforesaid lady into a very agitated state of spirits, and she paced the hall, be-

ginning to be out of all patience with every thing, and every body, so that when a loud dashing and trampling of horses and carriages was heard coming up the avenue, she stood as one beside herself; and when the hall-door seemed half beaten down with a succession of thunderings rather than raps, she actually screamed with horror. "Who in the world have we here?" she cried; but another succession of thunderings silenced her voice, and drove her, like one demented, to her own chamber.

Who in the world could the loud outrageous visitors have been but Harry Fairfax, who never knew his own mind, and his bride, quite as thoughtless a being as himself. They had both settled themselves in their chateau at Versailles, and made a hundred arrangements for a stay of some months; but the very next morning after their arrival, when sitting at breakfast, they suddenly resolved to set out in the afternoon of that same day for England, leaving the countess, their mother, to take care of the house till they returned. There was a fine disturbance in Old Court when the news of the arrival had circulated throughout the building and the several offices attached thereto. They came so unexpectedly, the bride and bridegroom, and their attendants; and there came so many of them, and the servants were such fine ladies and gentlemen, and there were so many trunks, and boxes, and

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packages, that, although there was no lack of hospitality, there were plenty of mistakes, and confusion reigned for many, many hours. In the first place Lady Clarice mistook Mistress Amabel, who had returned to the hall as fast as she left it, for the housekeeper, and consigned to her care a little lap-dog of King Charles's breed, which she said was ravenously hungry, and must eat immediately. And then one of the carriages, in driving round to the stable-yard, nearly unhorsed the old knight, who was walking his horse home while he gave some directions to the groom who followed him ; and a kitchen-wench was found with her greasy apron on, and a gridiron in her hand, standing stock-still in the passage leading to the drawing-room. Her mouth and eyes were open with astonishment, but she could give no account of herself, nor how she had got thither, when Mrs. Bartlett, the housekeeper, questioned her. Such were some of the disturbances which were occasioned by the sudden invasion of Lady Clarice Fairfax and her husband, with their train of servants, on the quiet and orderly establishment of Old Court that fair summer evening—I assure you they are not exaggerated.

" Well, sir," said the Lady Clarice to her father-in-law, as they were sitting on the terrace after dinner a few days after her arrival at Old Court, " I am charmed with your old family mansion, and

your fine trees; and what a noble green-house you have! I declare the orange-trees are almost as large as those at Versailles! Are they not, Harry? What fruit you have! These apricots are the finest I ever saw, or tasted either," she added, after a short pause, in which the knight had gallantly offered a glass basket, piled to the top with them (they were sitting at dessert), to his merry daughter-in-law. "I have been only wishing to make a few improvements," she continued, turning more to the knight, as if to address him more particularly. The old gentleman bowed. "I've been telling Grace that I should cut down all those black yew hedges which are so frightfully formal." The knight did not bow again. "That long straight canal should be made to wind along to the temple, and the temple should be turned into a boat-house, and just there—*there!* I am afraid you don't see where I mean," she cried, pointing with her fan.

"Thank you; I do see," replied the knight, very politely, but very coldly. To him the idea of *alteration* in aught about Old Court was any thing but another word for *improvement*.

"There!" continued the heedless lady, "I should give the water a sudden turn; and just at the turn I'd build a rustic bridge, to give the appearance of a river, which might be then supposed to wind through the whole of the grounds. In short, I

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should turn these old-fashioned gardens into a charming wilderness, another Eden, according to Milton's description, or what we call in France *un jardin Anglais*. I assure you, I have begun the very same improvements about our own little chateau at Versailles."

"Oh, barbarous Lady Clarice!" interrupted Grace, with a very lively smile, and a very earnest manner, "would you shock my father and my aunt, and almost break my heart, by alterations in the place we think, if not the prettiest, the pleasantest in England? You should be here in the winter, and you would soon recall your abuse of our formal yew-hedges. You should see and you should feel the warmth of those slandered enclosures, where one may bask in every gleam of sunshine while the wind is blowing bleak and cutting without; and this green that is somewhat sombre now, is bright and beautiful when other trees stand leafless and shivering in the blast. Don't you remember, too, that charming line on the foliage of the pine, which may be well applied to his cousin the yew—'*Deuil de l'été, et parure de l'hiver*'? You must not defend your cause by Milton's authority, for though it's very true, that he speaks of a garden and flowers

which not nice art,

In bed and curious knots, but nature boon

INTRODUCTION TO OLD COURT. 15

Pour'd forth profuse on hill, and dale, and plain,
Both where the morning sun first warmly smote
The open field, and where the unpierced shade
Imbrownd the noontide bowers ;'

yet he is then describing the garden of Eden, not
Old Court; the climate of Paradise, not England;
—a garden and a climate where

' From a sapphire fount the crisped brooks,
Rolling on orient pearl, and sands of gold,
With mazy error, under pendant shades,
Ran nectar, visiting each plant, and fed
Flowers worthy of Paradise'—

indeed

' Flowers of all hue, and without thorn the rose.'

Besides," continued Grace, playfully, "either in
his *L'Allegro* or *Il Penseroso*—(how could I doubt
in which?)—in *Il Penseroso*, he discovers some-
thing of our formal taste:

' And add to these retired Leisure,
That in trim gardens takes his pleasure.'

"In short, my dear sister," she said, lowering her
voice, and looking at her father, with eyes brimful
of mirth, as she spoke, "if you wish to be looked
upon as a traitor to good taste here by my father
and my aunt—ay, and by myself also, you will pro-
pose to improve our house or our gardens. I speak
in earnest," she added, placing her little hand on her

heart: "and look how anxiously grave my father and aunt still appear."

Now it happened that, just as she said this, the good old knight began to smile at the turn she had given to a subject that always made him look a little gloomy. He never took his eyes off the face of his darling Grace, as shaking his head with feigned anger, and yielding to a laugh still half repressed—

"Ah, little one!" he said, "are you not afraid to speak thus of your aunt and me in our very presence? I tell you what, Lady Clarice, 'tis with Gracey herself we must begin our improvements. I assure you, however," he added, in a more serious tone, "Grace is sincerely attached to this old-fashioned place, and loves every little corner with all her heart: but 'tis very natural; her poor mother did so before her—and the child was born here."

"Grace is a good girl," said Mistress Amabel, who had seen no jest in the discussion of such a subject, rather making the remark to herself than to any other person; "Grace is a good girl, and like her mother, not only in looks but in disposition, not fond of changes and—"

Grace guessed the word that was coming, and guessed rightly that it might have been a word of offence to the ears of Lady Clarice; so ere Mistress Amabel could add the word "whims" to "changes,"

she had drawn her sister's arm within hers, and they were half way down the smoothly shaven lawn which sloped from the margin of the terrace, on their way to the wilderness; for there is a wilderness at Old Court. I beg pardon of the shade of my Lord Verulam, I mean a "heath or desert," as he expresses it. The heath at Old Court. Hear him describe it. "For the heath, I wish it to be framed as near as may be to a natural wilderness. Trees, I would have none in it, but some thickets made only with sweet-briar and honeysuckle, with wild-vine amongst them, and the ground set with violet, strawberries, and primroses; for these are sweet, and prosper in the shade: and these to be in the heath, here and there, not in any order. I like also little heaps, in the nature of mole-hills (such as are in wild-heaths), to be set, some with wild-thyme, some with pinks, some with germander, that gives a beautiful flower to the eye, some with periwinkle, some with cowslips, some with daisies, some with red roses, some with lilies of the valley, some with sweet-williams red, some with bear's-foot, and the like. Part of which heaps to be with standards of little bushes prick't upon their top, and part without: the standards to be roses, juniper, holly, bear-berries (these but here and there, because of the smell of their blossom), red-currants, gooseberries, rosemary, bays,

sweet-briar, and such like. But these standards to be kept with cutting, that they grow not out of shape."

I must say this, however, for the heath at Old Court, that it is not quite so barbarous a piece of formal bad taste as that which figures in the pages of my Lord Verulam. Perhaps it was originally planted after the exact model of the heath described above; but of this I am sure, it is not like it now, for the shrubs have been allowed to grow out of all shape and order, and, having been planted years and years ago, are now as tall and beautiful as trees; and all the flowers they have suffered to run wild, according to their own sweet, vagrant will, so that the place, being naturally a spot which art could not greatly disfigure, the ground all broken by abrupt hills, and some little winding valleys, and a clear brook murmuring through the whole extent, it is now one of the fairest wildernesses that Nature ever made.

But is this the melancholy Grace, whom I described as smiling so seldom of late? Is this the pensive maiden who had been (I can't find a better word for the fact) jilted by the heartless Mr. Joscelyn?—The very same. But Grace was naturally of a joyous disposition, and Grace had no pride to make her feel awkward and out of humour; and though wounded to the heart on a point where

a woman feels most deeply, she had turned for strength and patience and cheerfulness to a source where no one ever turned in vain; and thus, while her irritated feelings melted into pity and tender charity toward him who had wronged her, she gradually became the same happy creature she had been before she knew him.

It is the reward of those, who, like Grace Fairfax, consider the feelings, and study the happiness of others, humbly and piously resigning their will to Him who is far wiser and kinder than man, it is their reward to be free from the thousand petty cares and anxieties of selfishness, while He who sees all in secret, "is sure to make all things work together for their good."

During the visit of Harry and Lady Clarice at Old Court, Marmaduke Fairfax was married to his unportioned bride; and though the old knight gave up immediately a small estate and house in the adjoining county of Sussex (Old Court is in Kent) to his eldest son, he sent, at the same time, a very pressing invitation, requesting the new married pair to proceed, as soon as they might deem it agreeable, to Old Court, to meet the other bride and bridegroom. They came: the manly quiet Marmaduke and his Lucy. Every body admired Lucy at first sight; every one declared her beautiful; but the vain and trifling (Lady Clarice among

them) generally pronounced her a vast deal too reserved and serious. The fact was, Lucy had no pleasure in trifling, no taste for lavishing her enthusiasm on little follies; the distinguishing characteristic of her mind was good sense, of her disposition humility—unaffected good-humour, genuine humanity. From the time that Mrs. Fairfax appeared at Old Court, Lady Clarice, who, under all her levity and thoughtlessness, had a tolerable share of vanity and common downright selfishness, was anxious to take her departure. She felt that the nobility of Lucy's mind threw all her nobility of rank, and many other little advantages on which she had piqued herself, into the back-ground, and in vain she talked and laughed, and from the mere love of notice displayed her several accomplishments; one quiet remark of Lucy's drew the attention of every one away from her. The country girl, a mere uneducated child, she had pictured to herself, when told that Lucy was the daughter of a poor north country parson; had never been in London, and was some years younger than herself. She had not been in her society many hours before she felt herself awed by this uneducated parson's daughter. Lucy had no accomplishments; she could not sing; knew nothing of music; spoke not a word of French! Lady Clarice marvelled within herself what could make her so attractive. She could not

understand the simple charm which distinguishes every modest and perfectly feminine woman above the rest of her sex.

Old Court! I suppose I must give some description of Old Court. 'Tis a large rambling mansion, built in different reigns, and in different styles, according to the taste or convenience of its various masters, and though a mere jumble together of incongruous buildings, it has a noble and truly venerable appearance, as you look down upon it from the steep hills surrounding the green valley where it stands. There is a fine old tower of sobered brick, one of those of Henry the Seventh's time, just like that of Hadleigh Rectory. This tower is the gateway, and looks down a magnificent avenue of oaks, which the dappled deer often come bounding across, or where they love to stand in sultry weather, in their graceful groups, staring at one another, while arching and bending their beautiful necks, or tossing back their antlered heads.

One part of the house is very old—incredibly old to be inhabited; I believe, indeed, it is not inhabited, but merely kept from falling to pieces, from the fame attached to it. 'Tis an old crumbling tower, from the loop-holes of which, a very great-great-grandmother of the family, another Black Agnes, a most valiant dame, hight the lady

Sybilla, with her ladies defended her husband's castle and property against a neighbouring baron, one of those unruly and treacherous fellows who would gladly take advantage, in old times, of a husband's absence: he found a warmer reception than he expected from the wife. Then there's an old gable which I admire very much, with all its beams of carved wood-work, and an old sculptured boss at the summit of its peak, and a light hanging casement projecting nearly a foot and a half from the building. The grandest portion of the mansion is a court or quadrangle, built in the reign of James the first, entirely of stone, with something between a cloister and piazza (I can't tell which to call it), in the place of the lower story; in the centre is a little basin of crystal water, with an old river-god of white marble pouring his flood, or rather a fountain, from the beautiful Grecian urn on which he leans. The farther side of this piazza is open to the terrace, the broad terrace, where not a pebble is out of its place, where you may often see the peacocks perched upon the stone balustrade, and where, in summer weather, the stately orange and lemon-trees, already mentioned, are ranged along: whence, also, you may survey all the fine formal gardens below, which Lady Charice chose to abuse, and which I choose to admire; and beyond the gardens rise such stately groves, such masses of

dark feathering shade, broken only here and there by the silver shaft of a beech-tree, or the glimpse of a smooth hill-side, where the grass is emerald green, and the deer are feeding.

A word or two about the hall and the drawing-room, and no more descriptions at present; but I must speak of them, as strangers sometimes ask to be admitted to the sight of them. The hall is spacious and lofty, with lantern skylights in the roof, and a fine oriel window reaching to the ceiling of its recess. This hall, vast as it is, being furnished with more regard to comfort than many modern parlours, usually serves as the common sitting-room; and very warm it is, I assure you, in the depth of winter, for I have seen half the trunk of a good-sized tree blazing and crackling in that immense chimney, spreading a cheerful light into every remote corner, and gilding with fresh lustre the frames of the portraits that hang highest upon the walls. The drawing-room is indeed a charming room; many persons find fault with the immense sash windows, which, like those at Hampton Court, came into England with William the Third, and were put in the place of the former old casements by the knight's father; smitten, I suppose he was, by the glories of Dutch architecture. For my part, I like the drawing-room windows, for they let in floods of light, and make the room very cheerful, notwithstanding the hangings of

Gobelin tapestry, and the ceiling of dark and pan-nelled oak. That ceiling, dark as it may be, is beautiful; for it is painted in some compartments with rich heavy wreaths of gorgeous flowers, and every cornice and every fluted beam enriched with colours and gilding. The tables, cabinets, high-backed chairs, nay, all the furniture in the drawing-room, is of ebony, with knobs and handles of ivory: the chimney-piece of snow-white marble, and over it such a picture—a full-length portrait of Lady Grace Fairfax, one of the ladies of the Pembroke family, who intermarried with that of Old Court, painted by that prince of portrait painters, Vandyke. How pure, how perfectly unaffected appears that fair and delicate lady! what a feminine and modest expression about her countenance and person! How exquisitely clear her innocent brow! How like nature's own delicate pencilling the azure veins there, and on the slender wrists under those bracelets of orient-pearl. The eyes, the small full crimson lips, how full of sweetness! And then the draperies; what a noble simplicity in those broad masses, broken with soft and lustrous light! And how like her great-grand-daughter, Grace Fairfax, as Richardson would have said, in her Vandyke dress!—The picture might have been painted for Grace. To say the truth, that is almost my chief reason for praising it so highly.

CHRISTMAS AT OLD COURT.

1712.

"And after him came next the chill December;
Yet he, through merrie feasting that he made
And greate bonfires, did not the cold remember;
His Saviour's birth so much his mind did glad."

SPENSER.

BUT how was Christmas kept at Old Court? Not as it is too often kept by those who look back to the pleasant old customs, the feasting and revelry of their honest forefathers, but forget to look beyond to that joyful event which they profess to commemorate. Old Court was an old-fashioned place—a nook, where old customs lingered long after they had been turned out of doors with the fine old solid furniture from other old houses.

Sir Adam Fairfax was a gentleman of the old school, with a strong attachment to many old usages, and some old prejudices. He was, as the old song says,

"An old worshipful gentleman who had a greates estate,
That kept a brave old house at a bountifull rate."

He had also:

"A good old fashion, when Christmase was come,

to call in all his old neighbours, not quite "with

bagpipe and drum," but with a welcome to the full as hearty, though not so noisy. He had too much of that common sense, which happily is of all periods, to be silly, intemperate, and sinful, just for the sake of keeping up old customs. Though Sir Adam, being of a free and cheerful spirit, agreed in the maxim, that "to enjoy is to obey," yet he loved also to put this saying, I believe of old Jeremy Taylor's, into practice, that "no man is a better merchant than he that lays out his time upon God, and his money upon the poor." Therefore, at Christmas, though the house was generally filled with pleasant and merry company, that which was first attended to was the worship and service of the Lord—the guests first considered were the poor and needy, who stand in the place of Christ to their more wealthy brethren.

Some days before Christmas, Mistress Amabel, and her dear Grace Fairfax, and Mrs. Bartlett, the housekeeper, might be found in the servants' hall giving away good stout blankets and warm clothing, which they had been preparing for weeks, nay months before. More than once, or even twice, during Christmas time, tables were spread with the famous fare of the season, and barrels of good strong ale were kept flowing. But in the profusion of Old Court there was no waste, in the festivity neither intemperance nor drunkenness. To be sure, the

old knight did not say to his poor guests, when sitting down to a capital dinner, in the spirit of Harpagon, that he would have this sentence put up full in their sight—" *Il faut manger pour vivre, et non pas vivre pour manger;*" but he had often told them, and the example set by himself and all his family enforced his words, that he would have every one remember when they kept Christmas under his roof, that it was not only a merry but a sacred season. "He who gave us the command," said the knight, "ay, and repeated it again and again—'Rejoice,' would not allow us in our rejoicing to forget that we may be led into sin, that we are subject to death."

There was not the same shouting and riot, the same revelling and jesting which is not convenient, in the hall and kitchen of Old Court, as in some other mansions which I could mention; but at the conclusion of the feasting neither were there, as at some other mansions, the same scenes of lewd and drunken brawlings—the same brutal oaths, or loud indecent songs—the same disgusting sickness—nor, on the following morning, the same racking pains in the head and limbs. When the time for breaking up the feast at Old Court arrived, there were happy parties walking home in all directions through the park, not the less merry because they were sober and orderly, and much more thankful, because they

experienced the truth of the old song, "'Tis good to be merry and wise."

Sir Adam loved to have his children, and relations, and friends, about him at Christmas; and every room in the old mansion was usually occupied, and every one seemed to be happy and cheerful. But here again the disposition and example of the good old knight shed their kindly influence. His rejoicing had in it some resemblance to that sweet harmony which the poor shepherds heard when angel voices broke upon the dreary stillness of their midnight watching, and not only "Peace on earth," and not only "Goodwill toward men," were his delightful theme; but "Glory to God on high," the first aspiration of his simple heart. The duties that were restraints to many were privileges to him, and the same spirit seemed to haunt the very walls of Old Court.

"An old inscription that!" said Sir Adam to a tall handsome man, to whose inquiries he was replying, as they moved round the hall together, stopping before the family pictures, and the suits of armour hung upon the spacious walls.

"Oh, let me know, tell me," said Lady Clarice, throwing down a book that she had been yawning over, not reading, and she rose up languidly, and took the arm of the younger gentleman. "Tell

me what it means, for I've often looked at it, and I intended to ask, only I was too idle."

The words were over the huge chimney-piece, graven and gilded in the old Saxon character upon a long slip of black marble.

"The inscription was placed there by one of the first masters of this old place," said Sir Adam, "the Lord Reginald de Fairfax; and I suppose all his descendants have loved and revered the spirit that placed them there as sincerely as I do: 'I am a stranger before Thee, and a sojourner, as as all my Fathers were.' We have always kept the words bright, and I might almost say legible, were they not in that quaint old Saxon character."

"Oh!" exclaimed Lady Clarice, with a look meant to appear equally wise and pensive, "very fine! and where are they—in what author?"

"In the Bible, my dear child," replied the old gentleman, very kindly, "in the thirty-ninth psalm."—Lady Clarice felt a little abashed, but soon recovered herself.

I must now inform you that the said lady, who on her last visit at Old Court had left an impression that she was a little of the hoyden, and very childish and merry, had astonished every one by making her appearance in a new character, which became her, which becomes every one, very badly. She had grown languid, and die-away, and quietly

overbearing and dictatorial. Mistress Amabel, who was tolerably clear-sighted, told Grace, in confidence, that she was sure that Lady Clarice had come prepared, in her own opinion, to take precedence of Mrs. Fairfax, as well in mind and manner as in rank; "and I'm sorry to say, my dear, it shows a petty spirit, and a little want of heart as well as wisdom," she added, "and I do hope she will see the folly of making herself so unpleasing a companion, as we are likely to have a good deal of her society for some time to come."

Now, my gentle reader, I dare say you do not dream, though the date of this chapter might have told you, that two years and some four or five months have passed since I first introduced you to Lady Clarice, or rather to Old Court; but you must take my word for it, and bear with my humour, if in a few pages I skip over a few years. I assure you, and I ought to know (for I am a constant visitor at the ancient mansion), nothing that would interest you, or, to tell you the truth, that has interested me sufficiently to induce me to write it down, has occurred among the family of Fairfax since that pleasant summer-tide, when we met the same party who are now assembled again at Old Court. To be sure, a few events have taken place, quite according to the natural course of things, which I might as well mention. Mrs. Fairfax

has two children, is it not fearful, in two years? Lady Clarice and Mr. Harry Fairfax have managed to run through an immense fortune, which, with their one little girl, is put out to nurse for the present, and they are fixed, if they can be fixed any where, at Old Court, till their affairs come round again. Grace, her father's favourite, and my favourite, and every body's favourite; nay, nay, I don't mean your favourite, gentle reader, for gentle as I call you by courtesy, you may, out of sheer contradiction (as I myself, were I the reader, should probably do, from the same very natural reason), you may not think Grace half so charming as I do. But what of Grace?—no, I can't answer your question yet; let me be prosy and prolix a little longer about Grace; that is, let me assure you, once and again, that although my pen may fail in the description, she is really a charming girl, and not the less interesting because that dolt of a fellow, own brother, I'm sorry to say, to Lady Clarice, after showing good taste enough to admire, I would not say *love* her, was so heartless and brutal as to do all he could to break her heart. Ladies *are* heart-broken, are they not, in such cases, generally? or are they?—Grace had too poor an opinion of herself and too high a sense of duty to neglect her heart and let it get broken.—And now what of Grace? why little more than this, she has not

only regained her cheerfulness, but her bloom: her soft dark eyes, dark blue, I mean, are as bright as—I look in vain for a simile, the subject's worn out—as bright as they were before they had been dimmed by weeping over the perfidy of that pitiful Josselyn. Her hair hangs in its dark and shining rings over a cheek which health has tinted, and which modesty deepens very often, with richer rose-colour. Her form, it was always very slight, is now delicately rounded and buoyant with health. But is Grace still single? Shall I tell you what I think, or what I know? what I think, for I know very little. Well, I think thus:—You know that a few pages back I said something about a tall, fine-looking man, who was admiring the stiff old pictures, and the rusty old armour that hangs round the hall. He, I suspect (and so does our dear aunt Amabel), he has his thoughts about Grace; and Grace does not think him the most disagreeable man in the world. But now I come to a stand—I have nothing more to say about Grace, and can only add that the name of that tall man is Seymour.

And now for something more about Christmas at Old Court. I have no intention to go through the description of the old usages and customs still kept up there. So many have done the thing so well, that mine would be not only a tedious, but a

twice-told tale, were I to speak about the yule-clog, and the yule-candles, and how that, when the snow was pelting against the window-pane, late, very late on Christmas-eve, and we were all sitting round a dying fire, and feeling a few slight pinches of the cold, suddenly the Christmas carol sounded from without; and how that the cheerful and harmonious voices of the rustic singers, and the old quaint words, pronounced, as they were, so clearly, coming at that season and that hour, were better than fine music to me; and how that, in my dreams, I heard them over and over again, till other music blended with the strain; and I woke at last to understand that I was listening to what has always seemed to me the most deliciously mournful pleasure, music under my chamber-window, gradually—oh! so very gradually—waking one up at last to consciousness.

Christmas day is over at Old Court; and, to tell you the truth, we began to get a little tired of old customs; for this winter we had been too busy, too cheerful; and we were tired of being busy and cheerful. Suddenly Lady Clarice, who had been conversing for some little time with Grace, started up, with some of her old energy of manner, and proposed to all the party, after calling us all around her, that a plan, which had just occurred to her, should be adopted. I saw Grace smile when she claimed the plan as her own; and aunt Amabel

has since told me that she overheard Grace make the original proposition to Lady Clarice. At any rate, I was well enough pleased with the plan—we all were—and put it into practice immediately. It was this: that every one present should take it by turns to contribute a story and a song towards the amusement of the evening. We did so. The stories were told, the songs were sung, and to them you are indebted for this peep into Old Court. I have given a sort of frame-work to them, by describing to you the authors, or, at least, the readers of the following Tales.

EVENING THE FIRST.

"But a smooth and steadfast mind,
Gentle thoughts and calm desires,
Hearts with equal love combined,
Kindle never-dying fires."

THOMAS CAREW.

THE party assembled in the drawing-room, having found the hall a little too airy this intensely cold night.

Lady Clarice had put in a claim that she might be the first to read her story; but when the evening came she confessed that she had still more than half to write. Several of the party were ready with their contributions, but the modest Mrs. Fairfax was requested to begin.

"I must forewarn you all," said Lucy, smiling as she opened the pretty little volume, in which she had written her tale, "that my amusement for this evening is rather of a melancholy character; but we are a very happy party, and I will let you into a secret, all will end well, and you know 'All's well that ends well.'"

"Rather of a melancholy character," said Lady

Clarice, repeating Lucy's words, and sinking languidly back in her chair. "My dear, it can't be too melancholy for me. Don't you agree with me, Mr. Seymour?" Her looks rather than her words expressed the question she wished to ask, for they turned a sidelong glance to a vacant seat next her, and that glance conveyed an invitation.

Mr. Seymour heard not, or seemed not to hear till he had quietly seated himself next to Grace; then very politely he turned to Lady Clarice.

"Pray begin at once, dear Lucy," she said, almost pettishly.

PATIENCE.

PATIENCE was an only child, but a poor unportioned orphan. Her mother, a weak and gentle creature, had been a distant cousin of the lady, or, according to the fashion of then speaking, of Dame Egerton; at whose marriage she was taken, as a sort of humble friend of the bride, into the family of Sir Ralph Egerton. This charity of Dame Egerton had more kindness in the intention than the performance and continuance of it; for the poor maiden was soon neglected and huffed by her protector (so falsely named), and made to do more than the work of many servants, without half the

pay and independence which attend the most menial servitude. This however was not extraordinary; for the religion of Dame Egerton consisted chiefly in church-goings, and lip-worship, and other formal observances, by which the heartless professor gains a reputation for piety in the world, while he is deceiving and condemning himself, and offering a solemn mockery to that Gracious Being, who will be pleased only with that religion which has its spring in the heart, and that profession which is humbly made by those who worship Him in spirit and in truth.

After some years of this wearisome bondage, the young lady married a man almost as poor as herself, and she thought thereby to better her condition. Alas! how sadly did she find herself mistaken! Her husband, one James Evelyn, turned out a worthless fellow, treated her very cruelly, and left her for a worthless woman, in whose company he went abroad, and died almost in beggary. In this her blameless widowhood, Mistress Evelyn became the mother of a little girl, born a few months after her husband's departure. The child was delicate and puny from her birth; as a blossom all too tender to meet the cold and blustering gales of an early English spring. Wailing and fretful, she lay in the soft bosom of her mother, depriving her of all rest by night or day—the source of ceaseless

care and trouble. But the babe was innocent, and her own, and had a consciousness to love her, which consciousness, however, was seldom displayed, except by its long and piteous weeping, if removed for a minute from its mother's arms. Yet who can wonder, at least what mother (for all others might), that the melancholy widow loved her infant with the full devotion of a heart which had long yearned after something to love. That it was positive happiness for her to sit for hours hushing and comforting the little fretful creature with that sweet and heavenly patience which makes the tender mother seem in her nature sometimes more than human.

The love she bore to her sickly infant, her anxiety for its eternal welfare, though, like the anxiety of many mothers, who are not pious Christians, it had more of superstition than true religion, first awoke her to think upon her own immortal spirit and its heavenly concerns. The minister of the parish in which she resided had frequently visited her humble lodging, and though hitherto she had received no spiritual benefit from his visits, she had begun to feel grateful for his kind sympathy, and to look upon him as a friend really interested in her forlorn condition. He had not failed to turn their conversation to the only topic which could have brought her real consolation; but we all know the very different effect of the sweet refreshing rain

upon a parched and thirsty soil, and upon a hard barren rock; and for a long time the heart of the poor widow was too like the barren rock. At last she herself spoke on the subject:—"If my child should die," she said, "before we had dedicated her to her God; and last night she was very ill;—I could not help kneeling down, holding up the poor babe, as if I could thus have offered her to the blessings of Him who took the little children in his arms and blessed them, when the anxious mothers brought their infants to him." The opportunity which Master Hooper had long prayed for had now arrived: gently and tenderly, with much kindness and affection, even as one who dealeth with an ignorant and helpless child, but very plainly, he revealed the simple truths of the gospel to her; and as he took for his example that blessed Person who never broke the bruised reed, he was soon after permitted to bind up the wounds of that weak and bruised spirit, and to behold it flourish with new life and hope. The term of the widow's sojourn on earth however was near its close; but before she died her little girl had received in baptism the name of Patience—a name it pleased the dying mother to bestow, for she hoped it might remind her daughter of that portion of scripture from which she herself had received great comfort. "Tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience,

and experience hope." You will find the words in the fifth chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans. Almost her last act was to write these words in the first page of the Bible—a rare treasure in those days—which she left her daughter. It was the only possession of any value she had to leave, and she had sold her few trinkets to purchase it. She wrote the words immediately under her daughter's name—Patience Evelyn.

Mrs. Evelyn had consigned her daughter to the good minister, Master Hooper, entreating him to make some interest for the poor child with her own relations, who had lately almost discarded her. Now it happened that Master Hooper, humble, and poor, and gently condescending as he was to all of low estate, was just then held in high esteem and repute by many of superior station. He had suffered much in the troublous times of the preceding reign; but even then this gentleness of his nature, and the sweet and blameless humility of his conduct, had proved a safeguard to his useful life, so that he had obtained of all parties the name of meek Master Hooper.

The relation of Patience, whom I have already mentioned as the wife of Sir Ralph Egerton, was dead, and the knight had married again to a lady whose family was well known to the good pastor. So, after he had given the little girl to the care of

his own trusty housekeeper, he took his staff in his hand, and set off to the residence of Sir Ralph, at Eltham in Kent, on his errand of charity; and pleaded so well with the gay and kind-hearted lady that she willingly undertook the charge of Patience.

"It would have been a most seasonable event had this poor weakly baby died," said the good woman into whose arms the little creature was given by Master Hooper's servant. God in his love and wisdom thought otherwise, as it is often the poor little weakling lamb of the flock that the kind shepherd nurses most tenderly in his bosom.

Yet the nurse of Patience meant not unkindly when she spoke thus. She knew the history of the little sickly infant, and she had known and pitied its mother: she was healthy, gentle, and sweet tempered, and the child thrived under her care, so that she soon began to love the little delicate lady as her own child, and to tremble at the bare idea of losing her.

Patience grew up, not quite pretty, but very fair and interesting; her form and carriage were naturally elegant, and her quiet retiring manner had at times something very charming about it. She was passed over, or scarcely noticed by common observers, but the gaze of many a thoughtful and refined character wandered from the mere perfec-

tion of features and complexion, to rest upon the dark eyes, full of soft and melancholy tenderness; the cheeks so very pale, yet so often crimsoned with deep and eloquent blushes; and those lips of hers, so beautiful when wreathed in smiles, so expressive of sweetness and purity of mind at all times.

Sir Ralph had several sons; the youngest of them was one of the few persons who had mind and heart enough to think Patience Evelyn the sweetest creature he had ever seen. Had the mother of Patience been permitted to revisit this earth, she would have seen that her dying prayers for her child had been graciously accepted; for Patience had grown up modest, humble, and pious in the bosom of a family which, with the exception of a very few individuals, were entirely given up to folly and worldly dissipation. Though removed from his immediate care, the holy and venerable Master Hooper had never lost sight of her; and his influence, joined to that of the pious though ignorant servant to whose care she had been consigned, met with the happiest success. So much, indeed, were the disposition and manners of this humble and unportioned maiden admired by those with whom she was acquainted, that, by the time she was nineteen, Patience had received more than one offer of marriage. She rejoiced that she had re-

fused them, when Cyril Egerton, soon after returning home from college, declared himself her suitor. Some little opposition was made by Sir Ralph, who had higher views for his son; but the kind-hearted mother-in-law of Cyril exerted her influence in favour of the youthful pair, and a full consent was given, it being agreed that soon after Cyril had taken holy orders, he should receive her hand in marriage. Patience thought herself the happiest girl in the world, yet their prospect of earthly possessions was very poor: a small living was promised them, and the knight said something about making a little additional allowance. They looked for nothing more. A few months before the appointed marriage-day, a grievous pestilence, which just then raged in many parts of England, made its appearance among the servants of Sir Ralph. Every precaution was taken to stop the spreading of the disease, but in vain. Dame Egerton and Patience were taken ill about the same time. Cyril, who had been absent at Cambridge, returned to find his father again a widower, and the death of his sweet Patience hourly expected. His anxious prayers, however, were heard; she did not die, but she continued very ill, and her constitution had sustained so severe a shock that her medical attendants declared her perfect recovery would be the work of years. The trials of Cyril and Pa-

tiences had but begun. The very day of his wife's funeral, when returning from the church, Sir Ralph was seized with the same complaint, and having long before ruined his constitution by intemperate living, he lingered but a little while. His body was soon carried by the same bearers, and laid in the same tomb with that of his wife.

The early and beloved friend of Patience, the venerable Master Hooper, was also taken off to his long home by the same pestilence.

And now Cyril saw for the first time what was likely to be the termination of his fondest earthly prospects. On examining into his father's affairs, it was discovered that of all his property, there remained barely sufficient for the support of the eldest son: the second, who had made a runaway match, and had several children, put in so urgent a claim for the living which had been designed for Cyril, that no less at the suggestion of Patience, than of his own conscience, he silently and cheerfully submitted to what was, in fact, beggary.

There was but one plan to be pursued: Cyril was not long in deliberating or deciding. He went up to Cambridge, and offered himself as candidate for a fellowship at his own college. His superior talents and acquirements had long been acknowledged there; they were now in some manner put to the proof, and with complete success. He was

electd fellow, and soon after tutor; and thus, alas! his marriage was, for some years at least, deferred, if not broken off for ever; but what else could he have done? He had been too poor without his fellowship, to support even himself, much less a wife. How anxiously had he desired to make his poor Patience his wife, and watch over her recovery with the care and tenderness which he knew none but himself could show to her: for no one loved her so fondly, so devotedly as himself. It was now impossible! One happiness yet remained to him. When looking out for an abode for Patience, he discovered that the housekeeper of her early protector, Master Hooper, had retired to a small house of her own in her native county, Cambridgeshire. To this house Patience was removed after her lover had almost stripped his own rooms at college of their furniture, to fit up two pleasant apartments for her. But here is the fair relief to the dark shadows of my melancholy picture. In all the trials of this faithful pair not a murmur had escaped their lips. Not only were they true to each other, but to their God. At the commencement of her illness, when Patience was enabled to admit Cyril to her presence, when she had partly foreseen the series of disappointments which awaited them, he had found her with the Bible, her mother's last gift, before her.

"Turn to the first page, my beloved Cyril," she said, "and let us kneel down together; side by side let us pray, that whatever trials are at hand, He who best knoweth how to give good gifts unto His children, will keep those words uppermost in our hearts, and let His blessing rest upon them. They were a great consolation to my poor mother, and I have long regarded them as not only her last will and testament, but her rich legacy to me. I have not courage, I must confess, to look into the future; nay, I might imagine a deeper gloom than we shall be called upon to enter; but let this assurance, to the truth of which, experience and the book of God alike bear witness, be ever before us, that we cannot be wiser than the fountain of wisdom, nor kinder than He whose very name is Love."

Patience could not be removed for some length of time, having suffered a very dangerous relapse, and she was in a state of such extreme weakness when brought to the cottage, that at their first interview she could not even speak to her beloved Cyril. He took her little thin hands in his, and raised them to his lips; but she could scarcely return his gentle pressure: she could only sit and look at him till the tears stood in her large expressive eyes, and smile after smile beamed languidly over her face. He was soon obliged to leave her. The new duties of his office called for him:

but he almost kneeled to the old housekeeper as he entreated her to watch over her delicate patient—to wait upon her with the tenderness of a mother towards a little helpless infant.—What was there that he would not promise to repay?—He stopped, and coloured deeply with innocent shame; for what had he to offer except that which he had already promised over and over again?

For more than a year but little amendment was to be discovered in her symptoms, and all this time the attendance of superior medical men was required, and many, many other expenses were incurred, which Cyril considered as quite indispensable. It was his delight to see that every thing he could procure should be provided; 'twas his delight to anticipate not only the wants, but the wishes, the slightest fancies of his poor little feeble girl. And how were all these expenses defrayed? By economy the most rigid, by the strictest self-denial as to his own personal comforts. His college gown concealed garments patched and threadbare as those of some wretched pauper. His meals were only those taken in the college-hall. During the cold winter nights he denied himself the comfort even of the smallest fire; and as for his labours, they were so incessant that those about him often feared his strength would at last sink under them. But these self-denials and privations were pleasures

to him. The object before him seemed to concert his happiness so deeply that every suffering on his part to attain that object had energy and hope mixed up with its alloy.

Cyril contrived to hide from the knowledge of Patience the sufferings and privations he endured for her; not only did he always meet her with smiles of genuine cheerfulness, but he reserved a suit of clothes for his visits far superior to the miserable garments which he was forced to wear in college. Ah! with what delight did he seize on every rare opportunity that offered to visit his beloved Patience! how joyfully did he set out on foot upon his little pilgrimage of some twenty miles long before daybreak, to return generally the same evening so fatigued that he could scarcely stand! To Cyril the vacations, however long, brought no cessation of labour, for he had engaged himself in some occupations connected with the Cambridge printing-press (perhaps the most tedious of all occupations), and they demanded his constant residence there. Indeed, notwithstanding his devoted love for his Patience, his nice sense of decorum, and the respect he paid to the maiden purity of her character, had made him determine never to spend more than a few hours at a time in her society.

Cyril Egerton stood very high in the estimation

of the Cambridge world. Not only the superiority of his talents, and his pious and irreproachable life, and the exemplary attention paid by him to all the duties of his station, led men to admire and respect him, but a disposition of remarkable sweetness, and manners cheerful and kind towards every one, made him a universal favourite.

At last Patience Evelyn began to recover; very, very slowly; but the sweet country air, and the perfect repose of the little village, had, with God's blessing, effected what medical men had almost despaired of; and yet, as if something was still reserved to perfect the chastening with which she was visited, her eyesight was pronounced to be in so precarious a state that the least over-exertion might injure her eyes past recovery. This was indeed a hard trial to Patience, but she bore it as meekly as she had hitherto borne every other. Yet she had formed so many little plans for her own support when confined entirely to her sick-chamber, or her bed! in so many ways she had resolved to relieve her kind Cyril from the heavy expense of supporting her; and every little plan had been so cherished, and so matured by quiet thought and constant meditation! "However, in all this my will has been, perhaps, too entirely consulted," she said to herself; "and is my will the best? Oh, Lord! not my will, but thine, be done."

It was not that her obligations to him, who had been so long her betrothed husband, weighed heavily upon her heart: oh no! the mind of Patience was superior to such undervaluing thoughts of him or of herself; but the trial was to sit day after day utterly useless and helpless, while the health and strength of the man whose exertions she would at least have shared was gradually wasting away. Once, when she had neither seen nor heard of him for an unusual length of time, and at last had been worked up into a state of dreadful anxiety, a rumour was brought, in answer to her inquiries, that he was very ill: her fortitude nearly forsook her. She remained in a state of distraction and stupor, from which she was unable to rouse herself for hours. . . . She felt as if she had lost the power of recalling any passage of Scripture (her eyes were in too weak a state for her to read). Even the energy to pray seemed to desert her. A slight and hardly noticeable circumstance was the means of restoring her to herself. A little girl, the niece of her landlady, came into her chamber, and brought back her Bible, which the good woman had borrowed a few hours before. The child, in her simplicity, being told to take the Bible to the lady, literally placed the volume in her hands. Patience started, as if suddenly awakened, and exclaimed, as her tears fell fast and sweetly, " Ah! this is

indeed what I wanted! Ask her—ask your kind aunt to come to me at once; not to delay her coming, my child: she will read to me," she murmured to herself, "and tell me what He, who is my best friend, has said to comfort me." The old housekeeper read to her that fine psalm, which Luther loved to sing when bad news was brought to him; from which many besides Luther have experienced relief and refreshment under their heaviest sorrows. The forty-sixth is the psalm to which I allude.

Cyril Egerton had been ill, though not dangerously, and his recovery soon enabled him to pay his usual visit to his beloved Patience. Seven long years had passed away since the marriage of these two exemplary young persons had been suddenly broken off; and they were still the same resigned and cheerfully happy beings, with their earthly prospects wrapt in the same impenetrable gloom.

It was full term time, and the college to which Cyril belonged, being, from the high character of its tutor, unusually crowded, his time was more than commonly occupied. Yet, notwithstanding all his occupations, Cyril had managed to arrange a visit to his beloved Patience, from whom he had been long separated. On the very eve of his intended visit, while he was packing up, by the light

of his little lamp, a few trifling presents which he meant to carry in his hand to his Patience, news was brought to him of the sudden death of the master of the college. Quietly he locked up his little basket, and with a sigh—nothing more of complaint than a sigh—gave up all idea of his visit to his love, and prepared to turn his attendance on the fresh duties which, during the interregnum occasioned by the master's death, were to devolve on him.—“I must wait till Saturday,” he said to himself some days after; “the new master will have been elected then, and I will walk over in the even-tide, and spend the blessed Sabbath with my Patience.”

Two candidates for the mastership of ——— College were named. They were both excellent and venerable men, and equally beloved by Cyril. After some deliberation within himself, he decided not to oppose either of them; and as it happened that the hour of the election was that in which he delivered one of his lectures, he determined not to change the time of lecturing, and accordingly attended in the schools as usual.

About a quarter of an hour before his lecture was concluded Cyril was called out for a few minutes. It seemed that nothing very unusual had occurred, for he took up the book, which he had left open on his desk, and resumed the subject almost in the

same words. One of the students, however, a young man, who resembled him in the character of his mind, and who was sincerely and gratefully attached to Cyril, observed that he gave a new turn to the subject. He was lecturing on the Epistle to the Hebrews; of course on the Greek text. Now Egerton was particularly happy in his critical remarks, and the former portion of his discourse had been almost entirely critical, but suddenly he turned only to the doctrinal and practical instruction conveyed in the sacred text. He dwelt particularly on those encouraging words: they are in the 12th chapter of the epistle, "Consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be weary and faint in your minds:" and once he referred for the support of what he advanced, to the 5th chapter of Romans; but though his voice was peculiarly calm and low as he read the words, "Tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope:" his cheek was so very pale, and the expression of his whole countenance so strange, that after the other students had left the schools and dispersed, the youth who was the private friend of Cyril, having in vain waited to see him come forth, stole back to the room to discover the cause of his delay.

Cyril was seated just where they had left him, the book still open before him; but the young man

was struck to the heart at the state in which he found him. Egerton had no strength to rise: his elbows were fixed upon the desk, and his head resting on his hands; and he was not merely weeping, his whole frame trembled with convulsive agitation, and tears gushed like rain from his eyes. The young man softly closed the door, and sitting down beside him, he asked, in a voice of affectionate interest, what had happened to distress him so dreadfully? He received no answer; for Cyril heard him not. He waited a little while, and then rose, and tried to take one of the hands which clasped his head. At this Cyril looked up; and when he saw his friend's well-known and sympathizing look, he wept with a fresh burst of emotion. Something very dreadful must have happened to him, thought the young man; for Mr. Egerton is usually one whose calm and sober cheerfulness I have never seen equalled. I should have named him as the happiest man I know, and now he suddenly appears the most miserable. But while he stood there, Egerton began to recover himself, and after he had become, in some manner, composed, he bent down his face, and covered it with his two hands for a short space of time. Then, as if Cyril had wished to answer his inmost thoughts, he grasped the hand of his young friend, and said, "I *am* the happiest man you

know!—Come to my rooms with me and I will tell you all.” But before they reached the rooms the secret was told. An old bed-maker, who had waited on Evelyn for many years, saw him as he passed across the court, and, running up to him, seized his hand, and kissed it repeatedly.

“Excuse the liberty I take, dear, good sir!” she said, and her tears stood in her eyes as she looked him in the face; “but my joy makes me very bold. Well, God bless you and the sweet young lady! (for I’ve heard of her).—God bless you! You’ve been kind and good to all since you came a young stripling into this college, and I’m sure every body will wish you joy as Master of the college.”

A beautiful and cloudless sunset shows the lovelier if it follows a day of rain and gloom. Pardon my melancholy tale for the sake of the happiness with which it closes.

“I have but a few more words to finish with,” said Mrs. Fairfax, “and they are about the cloudless sunset.”

Egerton went over, as he had purposed, that Saturday evening, to visit his Patience, and he passed with her the Sabbath-day. A Sabbath indeed it was to them!—a day of holiest rest!—a day of peace, such as none but the suffering and chastened Christian can possess—such as none but

the pure and holy Christian can enjoy: but they too had long walked as through the valley of the shadow of death, with the staff and the rod of their God to comfort them, and now, in love and tender pity, He had led them to green pastures, and beside the still waters.

For some few years Cyril Egerton and his gentle wife remained resident at the College Lodge, of which he was now master, and their prosperity had all the humble grace of their adverse fortunes. But there was another office better suited to Egerton than the mastership of a large college at Cambridge, that of an humble parson in a quiet country village. Such had been ever the height of his earthly ambition; and Patience and he were on this, as on all other subjects, of the same mind.

Thus it happened, that when a little benefice in the West of England, which was in the gift of the college, fell vacant, the master, having resigned his office, declared his wishes, and was presented to the living. Thither he retired, and the blessings of all good men went with him. There they lived—that loved and loving pair—a long and happy life: there they died within a few hours one of the other—and they were buried in the same grave. You may see their tomb against the side-wall of the chancel in W*** church. The tomb is of that

soft, clear alabaster common in old churches; the figures are painted to imitate the life: they are kneeling, according to the quaint fashion of those days, one on each side of a low square pillar, covered with a pall of green, fringed with gold. They are dressed, she in a ruff and black fardingale, with her dark hair parted off her forehead under the modest cap and coif of the time; he in flowing robes, and trencher cap, and ruff, and peaked beard. A Bible lies open before them, with the words, so often mentioned in their story, graven upon it—"Tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope."

EPITAPH.

Here sleep, in hope, the bodies of
Cyril Egerton, Clerk, and his wife Patience.
They died on the same day.

Live to the Lord, and let Him be your feare;
Give Him that burden which you cannot beare;
And if awhile your wearie lot be cast
Through the darke desert which your Saviour past,
Look for His footsteps there, His spirit seeke,
'Twill guide you safely, though opprest and weake
We found it so; and hence securely rest,
Hoping to wake in mansions of the blest.

"Vastly pretty, indeed," said aunt Amabel, ere Mrs. Fairfax had closed her book; "and nothing can be more natural than the description of the tomb, with Mr. and Mrs. Egerton kneeling before it: it is just like that in Ash Church. But, Lady Clarice," she continued, in a very brisk manner, "surely you are not going to sleep?"

"Oh, no!" said the affected lady, just lifting up her head, and half unclosing her eyes; "Oh, no! I've heard it all of course; but it is a very doleful story; and I should say of you, my dear Lucy, (and she turned to Mrs. Fairfax), that you would write an excellent sermon. Really it is too bad, under the pretence of telling an entertaining story, to lecture one, on that text, all about hoping to experience tribulation. I can't say that I hope for any such thing."

"My dear Lady Clarice," said Grace, whose eyes had been all the while fixed kindly and tenderly on the calm and lovely countenance of Mrs. Fairfax, and who could not help feeling vexed at the levity and impertinence of Lady Clarice: "My dear Lady Clarice, you cannot, I assure you, lecture half so well as our dear Lucy, though you seem anxious to give us a specimen of your talent: but every body knows how sweetly you can sing. Do let me—let us all hear your song; for I know you have composed and written one; I have heard you

practising the pretty air, and a word or two has even reached me. Come, here is my guitar—my own Spanish guitar, which I like so much better than yours, aunt Amabel! with its wiry strings.”

Lady Clarice was now quite awake, and she rose with evident satisfaction, and took the guitar into her hands with very pretty bashfulness, and along the graceful instrument, with an elegance not the less studied from its apparent carelessness, around her neck. She did sing very sweetly, for her voice was naturally good, and her masters had been some of the most celebrated in Europe. This was her song.

THE KNIGHT'S DEPARTURE.

Forgive me, my true love, my own gallant knight,
If my cheek has turn'd pale at the thought of the fight;
If my poor heart, with sighing and sadness, replies
To the love that sits smiling and bright in your eyes;
I would not detain you, but no one can tell
The anguish it costs me to bid you farewell.

Forgive me, if trembling, my own dearest lord,
I clasp the rich baldric that girds on your sword;
If lock'd round your dear neck these fond arms should rest,
As I hang the light fluttering scarf on your breast.
And if, while I whisper my womanly fears,
The sheen of your armour is dimmed with my tears.

Wait, wait ! one last kiss on your forehead I seal
Ere the hard heavy casque must that forehead conceal ;
And wait, as I kiss you, I'll clip from your brow,
One lock of your soft hair, forgotten till now.
Ah, me !—you are weeping !—shame, shame on my grief !
Unworthy the wife of a warrior and chief.

See, now I am smiling !—Cheer thou, and depart ;
Each tear that thou shed'st is a pang to my heart :
And see, where thy war-steed, aroused by the sound
Of the sweet-throated bugle, stands pawing the ground :
Look once to these towers, ere you pass from my view,
And I'll wave with my kerchief a joyful adieu !

EVENING THE SECOND. ---

"WHERE do you intend us to meet this evening?" said Lady Clarice to her father-in-law.

"Wherever you please, my dear child," he replied; "but I have really not given the subject a thought: perhaps Grace can tell you. Tell me, Gracey," he said, "where are we to find you and your fair companions after dinner? In the drawing-room? or do you return to our old Christmas parlour, the hall?"

"I had a little plan," replied Grace, "with which I intended to surprise my sister Clarice."

"Oh how delightful!" exclaimed the last mentioned lady, who always felt pleased when her pleasure was considered. "Do tell me, my darling Grace?"

"I am afraid you expect too much," replied Grace. "I only intended to suit the scene of our evening entertainment, or in plain English, our room, as well as I could to the subject of the story to be read; and finding that my father has a manuscript for me to read to you, as his contribution to our evening's amusement, into which I have taken the liberty of peeping, I have ordered the library to

be lighted up. It is furnished so much in the style of Henry the Eighth's reign, that I thought it would carry on the illusion, or at least be very pleasant, while listening to some old story of the times, such as my father's manuscript, to encounter the visage of the sage Doctor Butts, or Anne of Cleves, or any other of our quaint old portraits."

"I quite agree with you, Grace," said Lady Clarice; " 'tis just the kind of idea that would have occurred to me. But where will you go when I read my story? for I must tell you the scene is not on old English ground, but in Switzerland."

"I'm afraid we cannot manage to surround ourselves with Alpine mountains," said the knight, "unless Lady Clarice would like to have the snow, which lies some feet deep in places just at present, heaped up into an amphitheatre of hills, where she might appear in the costume of a Savoyard girl, and tell her story to a set of shivering auditors."

"The very idea is quite freezing," replied the lady—

"And Clarice would never undertake to put your plan into practice," said her husband, taking up her sentence before she had finished it; "for it would set her teeth chattering instead of another little member, which has hitherto defied the cold."

"You are excessively pert, sir," answered Lady Clarice, relapsing into her usual languid manner,

and looking a little scoraful; "you had better employ yourself in heaping some more wood on the fire: *heaping*, I say, for a thaw might then take place in a higher region than that of the tongue, and in a certain person's head."

"I cannot say that I admire this new, and I suppose foreign, fashion of bantering," said aunt Amabel, who is, as we all know, apt to speak her mind. "I think it approaches very near to downright rudeness, and I must say---"

"Oh, dinner! dinner!" exclaimed the knight joyfully, as the door opened, and dinner was announced; and presenting his arm to Lady Clarice, he carried her off from the attack she deserved, but which was beginning to put her in no very pleasing humour.

We met in the library: to my taste the most comfortable room in the house; and certainly the warmest; for it has but one door, and you are there secure from those drafts of cold wind, which in too many houses, during frosty weather, come ailly from some undiscovered corner, and blow quietly but constantly, till one is thoroughly chilled: a favourite place of attack is just under the shoulder-blade. There are many finished pictures, and some few sketches by Holbein, about the room: one of them takes my fancy wondrously—a female head, some

very young lady of the court, I suppose. The picture to me is quite affecting, yet nothing is expressed in the attitude. The form is rather full than otherwise, and attired in a gown of sea-green, with a hem of gold. A thick veil, or rather wimple, falls in heavy folds from the back of the coif down upon the shoulders. The dress is stiff; and the right hand, which is merely clasped over the other, is ornamented with several rings, broad circlets of gold, one with a single emerald in the centre. A chain of gold, or I suppose I should say a carcanet, hangs as low as the waist, with a large cross suspended from it: all the gold is put on with real gilding. It is the contrast of the face to these stiff quaint garments that has always struck me. If ever a face was the index of a broken heart it is that; and yet the lady is evidently young, and the surface of her white forehead is as smooth as the soft, pale golden hair, parted so exactly above it. Her eyes, however, give that remarkable character to her face; they always meet the gaze with an expression so fixed, and at the same time so utterly wretched, that they seem to claim a sympathy from all. The original of that picture was the only—But no, no! I must stop. I am forgetting myself: some other time you shall have the story, not now—indeed I know not when. Now for the evening-song. Grace is to sing it, and without music, to one of Purcell's airs.

SONG.

AUTUMN gale! sweet autumn gale!
Sing with me a sober wail:
Summer loves the melting song;
Lightsome airs to spring belong;
Old December shouts with glee,
O'er wassail cup and revelry:
Them I note not, thee I call
To my sober festival.

Haste with sighs to woo the rose,
Blooming not till summer's close;
Seek her bower, but O beware!
Not to romp or frolic there,
Lest she lose her silken dress,
And her blushing loveliness—
Suck her fragrant breath, and bring
Odours on thy flutt'ring wing.

Hither, hither, autumn gale!
Turn thy flight, and lightly sail.
I see yon sweet bird's quiv'ring throat,
But scarcely hear his liquid note:
Turn thy flight, and to mine ear
Bring the music loud and clear.
Nearer—haste thee!—nearer still—
Now, go wander where you will.

Idle breeze!—that plaintive sigh
Tells me thou art lingering nigh.
Where the fruit hangs golden now,
Roughly blow, and bend the bough;
Or, to please my wayward will,
Shake the branch—'tis easier still—
And drop the fruit, that 's ripe and sweet,
On the green grass at my feet.

Autumn gale!—away, away!
We will seek yon ruin gray,
Where old Time hath hung his pall
O'er roofless aisle and ivied wall.
Ceasing now, the wail you love,
O'er fading flower and leafless grove,
Lift that dusky pall, and show
The dim forgotten tales below.
Fancy lingers thereabout
To help your pleasant story out.

Night is coming; flit away,
Till the dawn of cheerful day;
Braid your loose hair round your brow
With scarlet poppies, drooping low,
That the dewy flowers may weep
Over your eyelids as you sleep;
Fold your wing, and hang your head,
And sink into your leafy bed.

What! returning! restless breeze!
 Not so near, sir, if you please.
 Hence! away! thou specious foe!
 All too like some friends I know;
 Boon companions, warm and gay,
 While the golden sunbeams stay;
 Rude, and bitter cold like thee,
 In darkness and adversity.

"And now for my father's manuscript," said Grace.

KATHERINE PARR.

"A matron fair, discreet, and mild,
 In middle rank of life,
 On whom the haughty monarch smil'd,
 And woo'd her for his wife;
 But soon she found the saying true,
 That crowns with thorns are set,
 And regal robes of Tyrian hue
 A secret moth may fret."

The Gentlewoman turned Queen.

"Who hath been with thee at this early hour
 o' the day, my sweet sister?" Thus spake the
 Lady Herbert, as she entered the closet of the
 gentle Katherine Parr. Her words were hurried,
 and she came forward with a light, but nimble step.
 Yet ere she reached the middle of the chamber,
 where her sister sat thoughtful and motionless,

clasping her forehead with her hand, she stopped, and bending her knee even to the floor, she said, mildly, "Forgive me, gracious queen, but I have been so used to look upon thee, and to love thee as my own dear sister, that, perchance, I do at times forget thine altered station—"

"And—and—" cried Katherine, suddenly lifting up her head, and interrupting her sister with a sweetness of look and manner that was almost playful, "and I tell thee what, my Mary, I will not forgive thee, if when we meet in private, I am aught to thee but thy loved Katherine Parr. It may be right, that I should be accosted by thee in public, in the king's presence, as thy queen and mistress, although I must confess, that even then it wearies me to be the creature of such heartless forms. But, Oh! not here, not here, I do beseech thee! Nay, do not keep up that cold, unkind restraint, or my poor heart will sink altogether beneath this wearying yoke of royalty. I shall indeed chide thee like an elder sister, if my commands be thus again unheeded. Come hither, and let me clasp that loving breast to mine, and kiss those dear, dear lips. Sit thee down, sweet sister—take thou this chair, and I will sit beside thee. 'Who hath been with me at this early hour?' Did you not meet him then? My faithful friend and counsellor, even the Lord Primate Crammer. You

found me sad and thoughtful; but I had been dreaming, methinks, the whole night through, of poor Anne Ascough, our late familiar friend. My spirit had been sorely vexed; I felt as on a rack of uneasy and agonizing thoughts. Dear sister, I saw her face plainly before me; I heard her words in my ear distinctly. I saw them bring her, unable as she was to stand (her delicate limbs all dislocated from repeated tortures), I saw them bring her in her chair to the stake. I knew not where I stood; but it seemed not far from Gardiner, and the cruel Chancellor Wriothesly. I saw the savage glances, which often flashed from their smooth cruel faces as they sat discoursing in whispers one with the other; suddenly they spoke both eagerly and at once, to a dark monk that had questioned Mistress Anne; and their words flew to me. 'Urge her,' they said, 'to name her secret patrons; tell her that the king's free pardon doth await her; help her to name if she should seem forgetful,—the Lady Herbert, the Lord Primate Cranmer, Katherine Parr.' But I will cease this subject, it pains my heart. We must not lose our courage in looking back, for, if the primate be but rightly informed, we need more than mere human courage to look forward. I had but scarcely risen from my prayers when my Lord of Canterbury craved an audience with me. He came to put me

on my guard—he had heard that our foes are busy; and he charged me with many kind entreaties to be most discreet, ‘to keep a conscience,’ were his words, ‘as guileless as the innocent dove’s;’ but not to forget, that he who bade us match the dove for innocence, added this sage advice, that we should also seek the ‘serpent’s wisdom.’ ‘The holy Jesus,’ Cranmer thus continued, ‘doth not give commands which it is impossible for man to obey. He hath given power as well as precept, and all who humbly seek his Spirit, will ever find themselves enabled to obey his holy will.’ But I have spoken long; dear Mary, have I wearied thee, for thou dost look like one that heeded not? What is the matter? You are not well, your eyes are filled with tears, your hand trembles. Tell me what disturbs you? Now *do* speak, sister, for your perplexing silence peoples my brain with fancies that will madden me, if you do not speak at once.”

“I will speak forthwith,” replied the Lady Herbert, “but let me see you calmer, sweet sister. I would I had found you on your knees, that I might first have knelt beside you, and joined in prayers for strength, new strength with this new day of troubles. I could have told you better then.”

“Oh! you may tell me now; tell me the worst, whatsoever the bad may be, for bad this fearful pews is, I am persuaded. Yes, you *may* tell me;

I am prepared. See, I am calm. I did not forget to pray for that same strength of which you spoke. It is the daily bread I feel most in need of. It is given, I am sure it is, the Bible tells us so, fresh with the dawning day from heaven. I am like one lost, nay dead, without it. Even as I speak, I feel my soul supported by this angels' food. I am quite calm. Speak, sister, speak at once."

"There is no need of speech," the Lady Herbert whispered, and she gazed timidly all round the chamber. "No need of comment." Then she rose up, and softly fastened the door, sliding the massy bolt into its staples. She returned to her sister, and put into her hands a parchment, a deed or warrant of the law it looked like. For a moment, Katherine moved not. She looked down upon the parchment, and there came into her eyes a look of dread to open or examine it further. This delay was but for the moment. The deed was unfolded in her shaking fingers. She had soon read all that was written thereon. It was the warrant to convey her a prisoner to the Tower; the signature was there which she knew too well, the signature of the king her husband.

"It cannot be his writing," she cried wildly; "no, on my life, it is not his."—She knew it was.—"'Tis a base forgery. I'll to the king, and tell him how they treat me."—She rose up proudly.—Her sister sought to detain her.

"Whither would you go," she said, "not to the king?"

"No, no, not to the king, in sooth, but let me pass; only to yon cabinet, fond sister," she added, struggling gently to be free. "I have my husband's letters there. We'll mark how he has written 'Henry,' when he wrote those proofs of honest faith and true affection." She unlocked a cabinet of silver.—"Ah! see here, my sister; these letters almost break my heart, I laid them on the king's; they are from his children, Mary, Elizabeth, and young Prince Edward. They call me mother. How happy I had hoped to be! but I see the end of my fair hopes. I must submit this head, that I have held too high, to the cruel axe. Where are my wild thoughts wandering? I almost forget wherefore I came hither. Oh! for these letters of my too dear lord! There is the name, now so fatal to me. Look, every letter is the same, only his hand hath shaken as he signed the warrant. Bless him for that! I must wait to read a few words in this one letter, Mary. No, I will not; I'll lock the cabinet straightway."

"But that fearful parchment," said the Lady Herbert, "what wilt thou do with that? we must determine without delay."

"I have determined," cried the queen, with a firm voice. "I will do with it what Gardiner and his creatures would fain do with their mistress."

Katherine looked once again at the warrant, tore it asunder, and then cast it into the fire. After the warrant was consumed, she strove to enter into sprightly discourse with her sister; but the smell of the burnt parchment alarmed her fearful spirit, and she sprinkled sweet water from her essence vial about the room.

"I must think of nothing," she then said, "but how to save this poor head; for, trust me, sister, it is now in peril. There would be but few steps for me from the Tower to the scaffold."

Shortly after, the Lady Herbert left her sister to make further inquiries as to the plans of the queen's enemies, promising to return before noon. Katherine sat down, and so perplexed and disheartened did she become with the forebodings of her restless imagination, that when her attendants beheld her, they whispered one with another, that some sudden sickness had overtaken their mistress. Katherine smiled faintly at their words of kind condolence; but when she rose up, she found in truth that her mind had made her body sick. Her limbs trembled under her, and her heart beat with almost painful violence, so that she could scarcely breathe.

"I am indeed far from well," she replied to the question of her friend and cousin, the Lady Lane; "my poor head feels as if it were splitting with pain; I will do as you bid me, and lie down awhile."

She retired to her bedchamber, and bade them draw close the curtains of her bed, and leave her. It was not long after that Katherine started up from a state of heavy stupor, for the curtains of her bed were drawn aside, and the king stood beside her.

"My poor Kate," he said, after fixing his gaze upon her in silence for some moments, and taking her hand within his own, "Thou art indeed sick,—Thou art in a fever. Thy little hand is burning."

With that the king, scarcely looking for an answer, sat him down upon the bed, and fell to talking on many subjects; the queen striving, though but with an ill grace, and a vacant look, to join in the discourse.

"I longed to see thee, child," he said, as he took his leave; "and when the Lady Lane told me thou wert sick, and a-bed, I was sorely grieved. I would stay longer with thee, Kate, but I feel full of ailments myself. I'll send a doctor to thee. I pray thee, make good haste, and leave thy bed, for I shall miss thy pleasant wit and thy kind face many times in the day."

Katharine cared not to restrain her tears when the king had left her. She could scarce believe that he, who had been with her so lately, looking and speaking with the ease of free and fond affection, should have so easily given her up into the hands of her enemies. She had not dared to ques-

tion him. Could there have been any mistake? Had not she and her sister read the warrant wrongly? and then she half wished she had not burnt it, that her eyes might satisfy her mind again. Alas! she knew there could be no mistake. No one would have dared to forge the king's signature in such a matter. Might not his visit have been made merely to observe whether she had yet learnt any thing of his cruel measures? She feared what she had not consented to believe before, that he could mask his malice under smiles and the show of careless jesting. The Lady Lane entered the chamber, bearing on a golden salver a manchit and cup of wine, for the queen had not broken her fast that morning, but she gently pushed them both away untasted. The Lady Lane attempted to enter into conversation with her mistress. With much mildness, Katherine replied, but only by a few unconnected words, or by monosyllables. Sometimes even she started when addressed, and looked around her in silence, till she seemed not to understand that a word had been spoken to her, and so made no reply. But while the Lady Lane was in a strait what to do for her beloved lady, Doctor Wendy was announced. He had waited on his royal mistress by the king's command; and showed much sorrow when he beheld her altered appearance. Katherine was lying with her head half raised from the pillow, and supported by her hand; her gaze

was fixed, but, it seemed, by no external object. "Your majesty is very ill," said the doctor, "and hath need of a speedy remedy; but"—he looked half-round towards the Lady Lane. "We are as if alone in my gentle friend's company," replied the queen, interpreting his look; "the Lady Lane is a true friend." "Then," said the doctor, "I may declare that my art hath no remedy that can cool the fever of your frame, except it be a strange though simple one;—to beseech your majesty to rise up with no long delay, and put on a cheerful countenance, with brave attire and a stout heart, and not to let the day pass without seeking the king's presence; for trust me he is even now disquieted at your absence, and I need not counsel you, when with his majesty, to deport yourself with your natural grace and dignity, with self-possession, and a smiling face. I will not presume to tell the reason of my present counsel, nor will I guess the cause of your majesty's sickness. I would rather crave your pardon for the frankness of my speech; and plead as my excuse, that respect and that affection which an honest heart cannot at this time choose but betray." Katherine answered not at once, but suddenly she raised herself up, and looked full in the good man's face. "By my word," she then exclaimed, and her voice had recovered a lively firmness, "thou art a skilful doctor, and (I bless God for it) a hearty friend. I shall not for-

get this good turn." As she spake Katherine held out her hand. "Even already the fever is leaving me," she added. The doctor replied not, but bending his knee to the ground, he kissed his lady's hand. The Lady Lane perceiving the renewed spirit of her mistress, had again turned to the untasted viands. She came forward with the salver in her hands, and looked first at the doctor and then at the queen. "I understand thy cunning looks," said Katherine, playfully, "and when thou hast dismissed our friend, I will show thee I have found my appetite again." Doctor Wendy departed; and when the Lady Lane returned from the ante-chamber to which she had attended him, Queen Katherine fell into a cheerful talk with her, in which the Lady Herbert, who entered soon after, joined. "I had come," said she to her sister, "much depressed in spirit, to take counsel with your majesty, for I have been with those who tell me that perilous times are arrived to us; to us I may well say, for my own name, and that of our cousins, the Lady Lane and of the Lady Tyrwit also, are certainly put down with that of our royal mistress. I will confess on hearing this, and many other tidings of like import, my selfish heart had well nigh died within me; but, my gracious Katherine, thou hast thy natural voice and look again, and every word thou speakest gives me back my self-possession." "I have been fearful," replied

the queen, "I have lain bewildered in a dark multitude of thoughts; each one coming like a temptation to despair; but 'He is faithful Who will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it.' I looked to Him for help, although my prayer was little better than the desire of a feeble and fainting soul. But well may it be said, 'It is the Lord that sendeth songs in the night,' for I feel as one refreshed, and no longer fearful. I will not, with the grace of God, despond again; I will meet our troubles with a bold, ay, and with a cheerful face."

The queen hoped to be called to the presence of Henry during the course of the day; and accordingly, having dined with her kinswomen, the Ladies Lane and Herbert, and her friend the Lady Tyrwit, she, knowing that the king loved rich and delicate raiment, attired herself in more than her usual splendour. She did not sit down to be adorned by her maidens, but with her own quick fingers braided the tresses and arranged the links of her dark glossy hair about her smooth and snow-white forehead, then half hid its brightness beneath a coil of white sarsnet wrought with stars and waves of gold, and placed a circlet of rubies on her brow. Her kirtle was of amber silk, confined beneath the bosom by a zone of pearls and rubies, and fringed deeply with silver; and her mantle of violet-coloured velvet,

flowered along the hem with a border of frosted gold, fell from her shoulders to the floor. "I have decked my person," said the queen, "in rich garments, and in my health I feel strengthened and refreshed, but let me not forget my feeble spirit. Let us, dear friends," she turned to the Ladies Herbert, Lane, and Tyrwit, who were then only present with her, "let us now betake ourselves to private prayer and meditation, each in her separate closet."

When the queen and her ladies met together, there was no longer a fearful spirit or a mournful face among them. They knew, each one of them, that they were surrounded by dangers; that their enemies were powerful and crafty; that the humour of the king was uncertain, most uncertain since his health had failed him; but their cause was good, and they looked unto Him who never tarneth from the prayer of the poor destitute.

The queen bade the Lady Tyrwit read unto her parts of the Holy Bible, and she sat the while at her tapestry frame, working with the Lady Herbert and the Lady Lane at the same piece. It chanced that the subject of that piece of tapestry was the story of Queen Esther, where she enters unbidden into the presence of her lord the king. "Turn to the book of Esther, my kind friend," said the queen, after she had sat in silence bending over her work for some space of time. "It is surprising how the observant spirit may extract from

the simplest circumstances of common life whole-some instruction, ay, and much sweet comfort. 'Twas but a fancy when I bade the limner trace out this sacred story, and I well remember that when I did first sit down to the pleasant work, I had no thought how soon the course of my own life might know a sorrowful turning, and that, like the holy Esther, I should be called upon to suffer for the cause of God, and his persecuted people."

It was thus that the hours passed away, the queen and her ladies by turns reading and working; at times the book was closed, or the small fingers ceased their quick employment, while lively and encouraging discourse flowed from the words of Scripture. Night drew on unawares, and surprised them still at their work; and then the queen rising up, bade the ladies give over their employ. "I have been waiting," she said, mournfully, "in the vain hope that an invitation might be brought me from the king, to bid me to his presence. I had, as you know, determined to follow the counsel of Doctor Wendy, and visit the king before this day had passed; but I have lingered, willing not to seek him, but be sought. Now the sun has set, and I may wait, too long I fear, for my lord's bidding; therefore, within the hour, taking Queen Esther for my holy pattern, I will pass unbidden to the chamber of his majesty."

That night after supper, the queen, leaning upon

the Lady Herbert, her sister, the Lady Lane carrying the candle before her, went into the king's presence. The king was sitting talking with certain gentlemen of his chamber. But when Katherine Parr appeared before him, he courteously welcomed her, breaking off at once his talk with those about him. The heart of the queen grew lighter as her husband took her hand, and clasping it in both his own, looked tenderly upon her, and placed her in a seat beside his own. He rejoiced, he said, to see her health restored; and told her that the hours hung heavy in her absence. Then he sat thoughtful for awhile, his foot crossed upon his knee, till a sudden twinge of pain roused his thoughts to words. His manner was, however, calm even to smoothness, though a restless anger was betrayed beneath it, and there was a glancing in his eye, and a curl about his lip, which made Katherine shrink within herself. His talk was of religion, and he seemed to wish to be resolved of certain doubts, about which, with much seeming humility, he put many questions to the queen. Katherine had scarcely spoken, at her first entrance, but now her head drooped almost to her bosom, and her face was dyed with one deep glow of crimson; she was hot and cold, even to shivering, in the same minute, and she answered nothing. She sat as one who had lost the power of hearing,

but who had felt in every other sense some deep and agonizing calamity. Again the king repeated his questions. And Katherine thought his smoothness more affected, more at variance with the meaning of his words. "He will think me the guilty creature that my foes have painted me, nay, that I now seem," she thought within herself; and thereupon she strove strongly with her spirit, and with a brave meekness she lifted up her face, and mildly, and with reverent countenance, answered after this manner.

"Your majesty doth right well know, neither am I myself ignorant, how great is the imperfection and weakness of woman; how then cometh it now to pass, that your majesty, in such diffuse causes of religion, will seem to require my judgment? which, when I have uttered and said what I can, yet must I, and will I, refer my judgment in this and in all other cases to your majesty's wisdom as governor here on earth, being at the same time both my husband and my king."

The king had several times looked impatiently away, but as often he had refrained himself, and allowed her to proceed with no interruption, but here he suddenly cried out, "Not so, by St. Mary; you are become a doctor, Kate, to instruct us (as we take it), and not to be instructed or directed by us."

It was now that Katherine's self-possession and peculiar sweetness of temper shone out. With a gentle seriousness she turned her large mild eyes full upon her husband's face,—and if aught like a reproachful look mingled in their gaze, the winning melody of her voice would have removed the impression. “Nay, if your majesty take it so,” said she, “you have very much misunderstood me. I have ever been of opinion, that it is most unseemly in a woman to take upon her the office of teacher or instructor to her lord and husband; she should rather delight to learn of him and be taught of him. I cannot but confess that heretofore I have been so bold as to hold talk with your majesty, wherein sometimes, as in all free discussions, there hath seemed some difference of opinion between us; but this I have not done so much to maintain opinion, as I did it rather to minister discourse. I had hoped thereby that your majesty might with less grief pass over this painful time of your infirmity. And I had also hoped, that where I was wrong in my opinion, I might receive some profit and instruction from your majesty's discourse; for I would wish to refer myself to him, who, by the ordinance of nature, is my lord and most dear master.” Sure, never had the harp of David more power over the troubled spirit of the royal Saul, than had the simple words and the soothing voice of

Katherine upon her husband's wayward humour. "And is it even so, sweetheart?" he cried, with honest and joyful affection, smiling upon his fair and modest wife. "And tended your arguments to no worse end? Then we are perfect friends again, as ever at any time heretofore. Come nearer to me, Kate, my love,—I must even hold thee lovingly in my arms, and kiss the lips that breathe such true affection. It hath done me more good to hear those words of your own mouth, than present news of a hundred thousand kingdoms fallen to me. By my troth, I promise you, never again in any sort to mistake you." The queen found that she was, indeed, perfectly restored to her husband's love. He was now no longer alternately fierce and smooth in his demeanour towards her, he had dismissed all bantering from his tone, and spoke with a frank confidence and kindness, which she could no longer distrust. He entered into other very pleasant discourses with the queen and the lords and gentlemen standing by. In the end, he gave her leave to depart; and, when she was gone, he continued speaking of his queen with singular and affectionate commendation.

That night was one of deep and anxious consultation among the enemies of Katherine Parr. They determined to conceal the loss of the king's warrant against the queen; that against her ladies

being still in their possession. But all had been so arranged, that a warrant was then scarcely needed. The king had, in an audience with Gardiner and the chancellor, held that morning, agreed that the queen and her ladies should be seized when walking in the garden of the palace, at a certain hour in the afternoon of the following day. Since then his mind had been suddenly and wholly changed from all accordance to these schemes, but he forbade the gentlemen of his chamber to mention to any one the circumstances of his late interview with the queen.

The day, and almost the hour appointed, being come, the king being disposed to take the air (waited upon by two gentlemen only of his bed-chamber) went into the garden, whither the queen also came, being sent for by himself, the three ladies above-named alone waiting upon her. He seemed disposed to be as pleasant as ever. Suddenly, in the midst of their mirth, the hour determined having arrived, in cometh the lord chancellor, with forty of the king's guards at his heels. Katherine at once grew sick at heart, for the king broke off most suddenly his pleasant discourse with her. Most sternly did he frown, but Katherine soon perceived with delight that his anger was not directed against her. Henry stepped a little aside, and roughly called the chancellor, who came to him

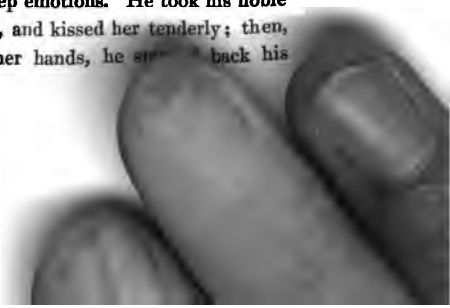
almost crawling upon his knees. Katherine heard not the words of the chancellor, for they were spoken with much softness and affected humility; but she did hear words of the king, as he replied, which showed the disposition of his mind at that time most plainly,—“ Knave, yea, arrant knave and fool,” he called him, and commanded him presently to depart from his presence. The king’s words were uttered somewhat low, yet were they so vehemently whispered out, that the queen and her ladies could not fail to hear them. They would have been no little comfort to her had she known at that time the cause of the chancellor’s coming, so perfectly as after she knew it. Thus departed her enemy out of the king’s presence, as he came, with all his train,—the whole mould of his device being utterly broken.

The king, after his departure, immediately returned to the queen; she perceived him to be very much chafed, although, coming towards her, he enforced himself to put on a merry countenance. With as sweet words as she could utter she endeavoured to soothe his displeasure. “ I can see that my beloved lord is sore displeased,” she said entreatingly, “ nor will I presume to dispute the justness of his anger; but I would fain make a good use of that high favour I enjoy, and prove that I can highly rate its value, by feeling, ay, and humbly

pleading, for those who have lost it. Out of free love for me," she said, and pressed her soft hands on her husband's arm, "if his offence be not very heinous, forgive the error of the lord chancellor. Let him be restored to his master's confidence and favour."

"Ah, poor soul!" replied Henry, gazing upon her, as he spoke, with astonishment, and that pity which is love's own parent, "thou little knowest how ill he deserved this grace at thy hands. On my word, sweetheart, he hath been towards thee an arrant knave, and so let him go."

"Towards me only," said the sweet Katherine, with a cheerfulness of voice which it blessed the heart to hear; "Oh, then, I will not leave thee till he is forgiven. Turn not away, my husband, while I speak. I will be bold, for I have an interest in this cause; let me not have to lament that I have let go a turn in which my words, my prayers (if it must be so)," she added, as Henry turned away seemingly displeased, "my prayers might have been successful, and were not. Have I no influence then, my kind, my royal Henry? Ah! I am sure I have! You *do* consent. The chancellor is forgiven." "He *is* forgiven," said Henry, his voice struggling with deep emotions. He took his noble wife into his arms, and kissed her tenderly; then, clasping one of her hands, he set back his



arm's length from her, that he might the better behold her with his admiring gaze, as he spoke. "There was One," he said, "whose portion was a throne, but on whose head his enemies did bind a crown of thorns. He was despised and rejected by those who should have prized his love dearer than their lives. When he was reviled, he reviled not again. He forgave his enemies; and did bless those who cursed him. I need not have been surprised, my gracious Katherine, to behold your actions, and to hear your words. You have been striving to follow in *His* holy steps; you have been taught of *His* spirit, and by *His* words. Oh, be it my endeavour henceforward not to straiten to you the narrow way of life which you have found; to curb my savage temper, and listen to no suspicions. Forgive me; for you have much to forgive; and love me still with that true heart: it is as kind as faithful."

EVENING THE THIRD.

To Norway, to Norway, weird sister away;
There 'll be groans on the blast there, and spoll on the
 spray,
Though smooth roll the billows, and freshly the gale
Now spreads out the pennon, and swells the white sail.
Hark! the poor fools are singing, light-hearted with glee,
At the thought of the loved homes they never shall see;
Come howl them a chorus to suit with their song,
Like the more of the tempest, 'twill cheer them along,—

Old Ballad.

“You know I cannot sing,” said Lucy to her brother-in-law, Harry Fairfax—“not even without music, aunt Amabel, though you are so sure I can;” and she smiled. “But I have a little request to make to one who does sing;” and the gentle Lady smiled even more sweetly—“to you, dear Lady Clarice! Will you sing this little song for me? Grace has been so kind as to arrange it, and you must sing it for me.”

Lady Clarice was both pleased and surprised: pleased, because she was quite aware that she seldom appeared to such advantage as when she sung; and surprised, that one whom she was always anxious to humble was either so blind as not to perceive her design, or so simple as to return good

for evil. With one of her most gracious smiles, she took the song from Lucy's hand, praised the words before she looked at them, and humming a few notes of the air, declared it extremely pretty; and sat down to sing it immediately.

THE WIFE'S SONG.

Dimly through our casement now,
The parting gleams of daylight glow;
Deep in the wave the sun has set;—
But, dearest, I perceive not yet
Thy bounding bark, with snowy sail
Swelling to the evening gale.
Dreary and dull the hours to me,
While thou art on the treacherous sea!

Sleep has closed our baby's eyes,
In her cradle hush'd she lies.
'Tis darker still, 'tis darkest night—
I vainly strain my anxious sight;
I listen, but the breeze is gone;
The sullen surges sound alone.
Leave, O leave! the treacherous sea!
Return, return, and comfort me:

It must be so.—A lurid haze
Steals o'er the beacon's lambent blaze.

Ah! the fog spreads—it thickens fast—
One gleam yet struggles—'tis the last!
My love, my life! it shines no more,
To guide thy bark the breakers o'er!
He sinks upon the treacherous sea,
And never will return to me!

Cease, cease thy wail, distrustful heart!
Dark fears, rebellious doubts, depart!
He who alone can walk the wave—
Does He not hear?—Shall He not save?
Hark! on the stillness sweetly falls
A step—a voice!—'tis me it calls!
Safe from the dark and treacherous sea
He comes at last, to comfort me.

We were just about to make a few pretty little speeches to the Lady Clarice, on her singing the song so sweetly, and to its fair writer, when aunt Amabel was called out by old Robin. She had been absent scarcely a minute when Robin appeared again, requesting that Miss Grace would go to her aunt.

“What's the matter, Robin?” said the knight, observing that notwithstanding the important air Robin had assumed, there was rather a roguish sparkle in his eye.

“Only a little disturbance, sir.”

"Oh, then," replied he, "I had better go and put a stop to it. Where is this disturbance?"

"It began in the servant's hall, sir," replied Robin; "but it's going on in your hall just now. Begging your honour's pardon, however," added Robin, "I think you are not wanted, for the ladies will settle it best; as it's only the young women that can't agree."

"What young women, Robin?" asked Lady Clarice.

"Your French miss, my lady, that's all, and Sally Peppercorn."

Lady Clarice flew out of the room, and a moment after I could not help stealing after her. Sir Adam called me, but for once I did not heed him; I could not resist peeping at the scene. I guessed what it must be, yet I did not dare venture within sight; so I took my station behind the door, and peeped through the crevice between that and the door-way. Aunt Amabel was seated in a sort of state, with a very grave face and dignified demeanour; Mrs. Bartlett stood next her, and Grace was leaning against the back of her chair. Lady Clarice having thrown herself back in a large arm-chair near the fire, was leisurely surveying the parties, and occasionally putting in a word in a careless tone. The two disputants were standing on each side the table, and the door towards the servants' offices was

partly pushed open by a set of faces expressive of many different feelings, but all full of intense and eager interest. Sally Peppercorn I soon perceived was a tartar, but a fine strapping wench, usually with cheeks like a poppy, and eyes black as a coal; but now both cheeks and eyes glowing and flushing like a burning coal. Oh the intemperate warmth of some dispositions!—the violent and most ungraceful manner of expressing that intemperate warmth! Vainly did Mistress Amabel require some explanation. Sally stormed, and struck her fist upon the table, and tossed back her head, and turned up her nose, and stood at bay, with her arms a-kimbo, directing all these said and several gesticulations—with a power of words, which, as they came from a woman's mouth, I could not repeat—full in the face of Mademoiselle Julie, but giving not a word in reply to aunt Amabel's questions. She turned to Mademoiselle, but with little better success; Mademoiselle Julie made a slight obeisance, arched her eyebrows, shrugged up her shoulders, and replied in French.

“What does she say, my dear Grace?” inquired aunt Amabel, turning to her niece.

“Que dites vous, Julie?” said Grace.

“Dear me, Miss Grace,” exclaimed Sally, whose first burst of rage was over, but who went off again in a moment; “don't talk that outlandish jargon

with her—a pert minx! It's just her way to make believe she can't understand a word we women put to her; but she has English ears, and I could box them, that I could! though she hasn't an English tongue. She can hear all the fine speeches of the men fast enough, impudent baggage! and she can whisper, and make signs, and sing to them; but when we women comes a-nigh her, she's all hoity-toity, and would come the fine lady over us—I wonder the men are such fools! but there! it's just the same with all of them, from little Jack Harness, the postilion, up to old Robin! a great dolt! see how he stands staring and gaping there! they are all bewitched, I think. Talk of witches! she's worse than any of them! worse a mortal deal than old Mother Howlet at Gorse Green. I think, I'm sure I do, that she has all the tricks and the mischief of the black art about her. There was Betty-dairy, and cook, and Hannah-laundry-maid, and me, all standing just before dinner, in the hall, waiting for Mrs. Bartlett to come down; and stand we might, and far enough from the fire, and I came down so cold I was ready to perish: I'm sure this arm of mine was blue and brick-dust colour, and all manner of colours! Well, the men were all sitting round the fire, and not a man-Jack of them offered to budge. Down comes madam, dying and languishing, and dropping down her eyelids like

two saucers, with her ribands flying, and her rings upon her fingers, and her beads about her neck, and all her missis's essence-bottles emptied upon her clothes,—down she comes, whisking by us women, as if we weren't fit to be the earth under her feet; and she sidles and simpers up to the men, and, I'll warrant ye, up jumped all the gentlemen before one could say Jack Robinson. Oh! I've no patience with her! I could spit upon her! There was George Bunting, as steady and civil spoken a young man as you'd wish to see on a summer's day—I won't deny it—I did like the lad, and he knew it; but la! then we had kept one another's company this three quarters of a year; but now, nothing will go down but your frenchified pusses. This very night!—this very night!"—and here her voice raised its pitch to its highest octave, and holding up her hands, and opening all her fingers, she stood much in the attitude of a cat about to make a spring, and use her talons.

"No, no, Sally! this is too much," exclaimed Grace, suddenly springing forward, and with much decision, and more force than I thought she possessed, stopping the fury, as she advanced—"For shame! Sally; for shame! You a woman! a modest Englishwoman of good character! Why, a bold, bad creature could not speak with worse language, nor use more violence! As for my aunt and me,

you will not let even our voices be heard. You a Christian maiden! kind-hearted and good-tempered, except when roused to these violent fits of passion! you, who would not hurt a worm, to abuse a fellow-creature, and a woman in a foreign land, in this manner—to attempt to strike her!"

Sally was abashed; she hung her head, but still looked very sullen.

"Do, Lady Clarice," said Grace, in a slightly indignant tone, "do speak to Julie, and desire her for the future to have nothing to say to the men."

Lady Clarice did not rise, but turning to Julie, she held up her finger, and said, "*Venez ici, mon enfant; dites moi la vérité; qu'avez vous fait pour tourner la tête à tous ces garçons là?*"

"*En vérité, Madame: Je ne saurai vous dire,*" answered Julie, with a most child-like innocence of manner; "*ce n'est pas ma faute; que voulez vous que je reponde à tous ces nigauds, qui ne cessent de me tourmenter? il faut pourtant quelquefois s'amuser, et pourquoi pas à leurs dépens; dans ce désert, cela sert à passer le tems.*"

"Eh bien! Julie," answered Lady Clarice, smiling languidly, and shrugging up her shoulders, "*on ne peut te trouver à redire; allez donc, mais souvenez vous que dans ce pays comme en France les femmes ne veulent pas être oubliées, ainsi menages là.*"

While Lady Clarice was thus speaking to Mademoiselle Julie, Grace had desired Sally to accompany her, and they had left the hall together. After a short absence Sally returned humble and downcast, and, to my astonishment, really a pretty, modest-looking girl. "Well, Sally!" I heard Grace say to her. Sally had been standing still near the door by which she entered. "Yes, Miss, I'm going!" was the reply, and immediately, though not without a visible effort, the downcast look cleared off, and Sally went straight up to the French girl, and holding out her own hand, looked her full in the face, and said, with a voice that came clear and firm from the heart, "I beg your pardon, young woman, and I'm ashamed of myself: and I hope I shall do so no more." "That's right, Sally! that's right!" exclaimed many voices from the door, in the direction of the kitchen.

"It's just like Sally," said Mrs. Bartlett, addressing herself to aunt Amabel: "it's always forget and forgive with her, as soon as the passion's over; and bless dear Miss Gracey! for she's always a peace-maker, just like her poor mother, ma'am, is she not?"

"She is indeed," said Mistress Amabel: "How like she looks now, speaking so earnestly to Lady Clarice, and yet with such a winning sweetness in her eyes! and now Lady Clarice has left her alone

with that fine lady, Madame Julia; and see, she's speaking to her so kindly!"

"And as easily, madam," continued Mrs. Bartlett, "as if it was all her mother-tongue that she was using. Well, she is what I call a lady! I only hope that French Miss will mind her advice, and leave off some of her airs and graces; for they won't do here, I can tell her. But to be sure, what can one expect," said the good old dame (who had a tolerable set of prejudices of her own), "what can one expect? for, as the song says,

' They'll cook and eat the frogs in France,
If 'tis the truth men tell us;
And the very dogs are taught to dance,
Till half the cats are jealous.'"

Aunt Amabel and Grace returned to the library together. "Every one is waiting for your story, Grace," said the knight; "but come and kiss me, child, before you begin; for, Lady Clarice tells me, you have been, as usual, making peace when peace is needed."

A LEGEND OF NORWAY.

Long ages ago, when the whole of Northern Europe was sunk in barbarism and dark idolatry, a young and beautiful maiden was found at sunrise upon the rugged coast of Norway. There she

stood, and looked wistfully over the retiring waves which had left their fringes of silvery surf at her small naked feet.

The night had been stormy, and a vessel lay wrecked among the rocks. All the crew had perished but that gentle lady. The savage people gathered about her, wondering much at the rare fashion and the richness of her flowing garments, and at her fresh and delicate beauty; but most of all at the sweetness and dignity of her demeanour.

It was this maiden who became the wife of Regnar, the young Prince of Norway; she was of equal birth with him, being a king's daughter, but obliged to flee from the usurper of her father's throne. The Princess Gurith, for so she was called, was not an idolater, yet for nearly a year after her marriage few persons but her husband knew the name of her religion. They soon learned, however, that in her it was pure and peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy; and so she was loved by all, and might have been happy, had not Queen Temora, the widow of the king's eldest son, visited the court of Norway. Now, this Temora was very beautiful, but proud and revengeful; and so skilled in magic, that by many she was named the Sorceress. Temora was queen, in her own right, of the far Orkney

Iales; and, notwithstanding her husband's sudden death, she had cherished the hope to reign in Norway also; for Ragnar, then the younger brother, though now the heir, had wooed her, when, from ambition, she preferred the elder prince.

When Temora came to the court, hiding her fiery passions with a smiling face, and saw the beauty of the innocent Gurith, and the influence she had won in the hearts of those around her, she devoted her to ruin. It is said that she went at midnight, far up among the hills, into the depths of a black pine forest, where stood a rude but famous temple of the idol Woden (the ruins are now scattered about the place), and there sprinkling her own blood upon the altar, vowed to accomplish a deep and horrible revenge. From that hour she left no way untried to reach her ends. At first, she sought, under the mask of friendship, to introduce into the heart of Gurith some dark suspicion of her husband's faith, and so, at length, to break that gentle heart; but the young princess was above suspicion; love, and her perfect confidence in him she loved, were as a breastplate of adamant to her, from which every weapon that was aimed against it fell off, not only blunted, but leaving no trace to show where it had struck. Thus, Temora was confounded and perplexed, for she had judged the princess by her own principles and feelings.

Still, notwithstanding all these deep devices, the

guileless Lady Gurith grew in favour and tender love with all who knew her, and the sorceress inwardly cursed herself, when she beheld the effect of Gurith's presence upon the barbarous Norwegians; an effect far more grateful to her woman's heart than the most awful influence of her own magic spells. When Gurith came forth into the banquet-hall, they met her with a reverence only next to adoration. Their brutal manner caught for the time somewhat of her gentleness; their fierce disputings stopped; their coarse jests and roars of laughter sounded more faintly: the very minstrels touched their harps more lightly, and turned their war-songs to some plaintive lay, such as a gentle woman loves to hear. But the secret of this influence was a mystery to the consummate artfulness of Queen Temora: she could not comprehend that simple humility and unaffected kindness can win their way to the most savage bosom.

For instance, after a battle, when the wounded were brought home, a band of warriors came forward to the terrace, on which Gurith and Queen Temora sat, surrounded by their ladies. They had brought the richest spoil, and laid it at the feet of the two princesses. Temora snatched at once a coronet of gems, and placed it with a haughty smile upon her head. They that stood by shuddered as they saw her bright eyes flashing, and the rich blush of plea-

sure on her cheek; for a few dark drops clung in the threads of yellow hair upon her brow, and then trickled down her face. There was human blood upon that coronet.—Gurith had scarcely looked upon the glittering haubles set before her; she had seen a wounded soldier fall exhausted at the gate, and she flew to raise him. They that stood by smiled with tender and admiring love, as they beheld her hands and garments stained with blood, for she had torn her long white veil to stanch the blood, dressing the wounds of the dying man with her own soft hands; and then, as other wounded soldiers were brought from the field, she had forgot her rank, and the feebleness of her sex, to administer also to their relief. It was in such instances as these that the character of Gurith was discovered; was it strange that she should seem almost a being of a higher order to the untutored savages? But soon Temora began to fear that Gurith was herself an enchantress, for every withering spell of witchcraft had been tried in vain against her. She had met at midnight with the weird women in their murky taverns; there they sung their charmed rhymes together, and held their horrid incantations. Gurith was still unharmed, still lovely, still happy in the love of her husband, and of all the people.

By a mere chance, the sorcerers at length dis-

covered what she felt convinced to be the secret of Gurith's hidden strength. There was a chamber, in a small lonely tower, that joined the palace, to which the young princess retired, not only at stated periods every day, but often, very often, at other times. There she would sometimes remain shut up for hours, and no one dared to break upon her privacy; even her husband humoured her wishes, and had never, since his marriage, visited that chamber. If sometimes she entered it mournful, dispirited, and with downcast looks, she never failed to come forth from her retirement with a new spirit, calm and smiling, and all the fair beauty of her face restored. This, then, was the chamber where those spells were woven which had baffled all the skill of the sorceress.

Not long after the queen had made the discovery of the chamber, the aged king, her father-in-law, while visiting the Princess Gurith, was struck with blindness. Temora began to rejoice, for an opportunity, well-suited to her own dark purposes, had at last occurred.

There was a solemn festival held in honour of the goddess Freya. In the midst of the rejoicing, the sorceress (her yellow hair streaming upon her shoulders, and her rich robes all rent) rushed into the hall. With frantic cries she bade the feasting cease, and, seizing from an aged scald the harp that

he was striking, she tore away the strings, and then, in sullen silence, she sat her down before the idol's image. Again she rose, and with a dagger's point, scratched a few rough characters upon the altar. The priests had gathered round her, and when they saw those letters they also shrieked aloud with horror: they fell before the idol, and bowed their faces to the ground, howling, and heaping dust upon their heads. Upon this, with a fixed and dreamy stare, Temora arose, and beating upon a sort of shapeless drum, commenced a low and melancholy chant.

She told them, that the nation had cause to mourn that heavy calamities had fallen upon them, that the gods had sent a curse among them. A monster had been cast up by the treacherous waves, and none had known their danger. Their king, their prince, nay, she herself, had been deceived; for that fearful monster had come among them in a human form, even as a beautiful maiden. They had cherished her, and now the judgment had fallen upon them: it had begun with the king—he was struck with blindness—where would it fall next? with prophetic glance she could foresee. But here the drum dropt from her hands; at once her frantic violence was stilled; she sunk upon the ground, and her long hair fell like a veil over her stern features.—She had said enough. As she began, a smothered sound of cursing rose on all sides; now the whirl-

wind of furious passion burst forth, and knew no bounds. The tumult spread far and wide among the people. Led by the wizard priests, they rushed to the palace, and demanded that their king should come forth to them. Now the poor old king, being in his dotage, and almost governed by the priests, had been persuaded, and tutored, to think, and to answer, just as they suggested. Led by the sorceress, he came forth, sightless and trembling, and his few faltering words confirmed all that the artful Temora had declared.

All this time Prince Regnar had been absent. He came in from hunting just when Temora had brought his father forth. Horror-struck, he soon perceived the purpose of the fiendlike woman; but in vain he sought to quell the furious tumult, his father was totally under the dominion of the priests, and when a cry was raised, demanding, as their victim, the young and innocent Gurith, the king's assent was given. As for the princess, she was not to be found. Two persons, however, who at once had guessed the place of her retreat, met at the door of her mysterious chamber. For once that door was scarcely closed. It opened at the gentle touch of Regnar, but there something arrested him. "Stop, stop," he whispered, holding the door firmly with one hand, while he thrust forth the other to prevent Temora from advancing. "Stop but a little

while. Let us not disturb her yet." Temora obeyed. Curiosity for a time mastered her vengeance. She wished to hear distinctly the words which were pronounced in that chamber: but what were the words that fell upon her ear? The low, sweet voice of Gurith, breathing forth prayers to the God she worshipped; pleading for her worst enemy, praying that He, whose favour is life, would give a new spirit, and sweet peace of mind, and every blessing to her sister Temora! The voice of Gurith ceased, and Ragnar entered softly. Temora had sunk upon the step where she had stood: she did not enter, though at last that chamber stood open before her; but with still greater astonishment than that with which she had listened, she gazed upon its inmate. Gurith had not heard the light step of her husband. She was kneeling, with both her hands covering her face. The tears that trickled through her fingers too well betrayed the anguish that had stopped her voice in prayer. And this, then, was the secret of the mysterious chamber. Gurith had trusted to no spell but that of innocence: her strength had been in the confession of her utter weakness to Him, with whom she held her high and spiritual communion, to Him whose strength is made perfect in the weakness of his children. To Him who hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, whose gracious invitation

is to the weary and the heavy laden, she had gone in every time of trial, and from the foot of His cross, where she ever laid the burden of her griefs, she had brought forth into the world that sweet and holy cheerfulness which passed even the understanding of the wretched Temora. Struck to the heart, the sorceress slunk silently away. Some feelings of remorse had seized upon her, and now she would have gladly stopped the tumult. Alas! she had no power to calm the storm which she had raised.—The frantic multitude had burst the palace gates.—Regnar was overpowered, and they were dragging their meek and innocent victim to the altar of the horrid idol, when suddenly, and it seemed miraculously, a higher power interposed and stopped their blind fury. The aged monarch fell dead into the arms of his attendants—the excitement of the last few hours had proved too much for his feeble frame. Instantly, and almost at a venture, a single voice cried out, “Long live King Regnar!” There was a breathless pause—and then the cry was echoed by the shouts of all the people. Gurith, the Christian Gurith, was saved.

EVENING THE FOURTH.

"O my love is a country lass,
 And I am but a country laddle:
 But true love is nae gentleman,
 And sweetness is nae lofty lady."

ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.

WELL, well, aunt Amabel! you and I were right in our wise guesses. This Mr. Seymour is a fine fellow, and I am heartily sorry for him. He has proposed for Grace; and, I think, of all the men she ever saw, he is the one she would have chosen for her husband. Yet he has been refused—not exactly by the knight—for Sir Adam could not find it in his heart to say no; but Gracey herself, with an aching heart, but a cheerful voice, and a look full of kindly and noble feelings (I heard this from Seymour himself), has modestly declined his offer. The reason is this: Sir Adam Fairfax is no longer a rich man. The heartless extravagance of his second son, and that trifling Lady Clarice, has been such a drain upon the coffers of the liberal old knight, that, I suspect, a certain sum of money, laid by for Grace's marriage portion, has, at her urgent request, been appropriated to the

discharge of their debts. Mr. Seymour has little more than his commission in the guards; and so he can do nothing but look miserable, and talk of hope, and entreat that he may be allowed to consider himself as the betrothed of Grace, for he declares he will never propose to any other woman. To this, however, Grace will not consent. "She will leave him perfectly free, she tells him; and if"—she could not get farther than that if. Seymour understood the deep blush, and the smile which succeeded, as she held out her hand to him. They have agreed to meet one another as they did before this proposal was made. Mr. Seymour will not leave us for a week. It really seems as if those Joscelyns are doomed to disturb the happiness of Grace Fairfax! First the brother! then this extravagant creature, Lady Clarice! Here is a proof, ye sage worldlings! Ye fathers and mothers, who make such a cry out about fortune when you marry your children! the burden of whose song is always

"O let him be rich! O then! O then!
O let him be rich! O then!"

Who think that with riches you are to acquire every blessing this world can bestow!—Here is a proof how silly and how mistaken you are! Are the eyes now fixed on these pages those of a parent, with grown up children? Now answer me,

parent! or rather answer to your own heart. Have you married your children—your gentle, modest girl—your noble, ingenuous son—to one whose large fortune was the chief recommendation?—Look at the fact now!—look at the eventful fact! How much happiness has followed this marriage? Have you witnessed no estrangement, no bitter regrets, no mutual accusations, no wretchedness of heart? “Pahaw!” you reply: “what silly romance is this?” Let me keep you to the question.—Look to the fact.—Look to your common everyday experience, and answer. I know ’tis the puling cant of all silly novel writers to prate about love, and all the silly sentiment which they put into the mouths of their silly heroes and heroines. Every one gifted with common sense must despise such folly. I am sure I do! But the wisdom, and the cold worldly selfishness, which has nothing of heart with it to excuse its errors, is infinitely more despicable.

Look at the event of the marriage of Harry Fairfax and Lady Clarice! She had an immense fortune; was young, pretty, good-natured. Even the honest-hearted knight, when he heard of his youngest son’s marriage, was led to rejoice, while he was vexed, and, for a moment, angry, that his son Marmaduke had chosen a bride with no dowry. But what was the consequence? Lacy, poor,

humble, prudent, and without selfishness, was a fortune to her husband, and, with a moderate income, they have many comforts, and more luxuries than they care to enjoy.

Lady Clarice, with her fortune, brought also a full consciousness of her own importance, and of her right to spend what she had brought. Her ideas and her habits, like those of too many wealthy young ladies, went far beyond her riches. She could not rest with a single wish ungratified, and her wishes were by no means within any reasonable bounds. The consequence was, that with all the wealth they have possessed, Harry Fairfax and his wife are now reduced for some years to a state of poverty or dependence.

I have written at the head of this chapter Evening the fourth; but I might as well have said nothing about the Evening, for, by a sort of common consent, generally understood though not expressed, our readings were discontinued for several nights. Grace was alone thought of, and even Lady Clarice, whose story was at last finished, waited till we should ask her to read it.

During this time Sir Adam and his elder son were often closeted together, and Mrs. Fairfax was sometimes admitted to their consultations. At length, when we were all assembled in the library

one rainy morning, Sir Adam unlocked his *escrêtoire* and took out a bundle of papers, which he gave into the hands of his son Marmaduke. We all took our seats in silence; for we saw, by his look and manner, that he was going to make some important communication. He informed us, that having consulted with his eldest son on the proposals of marriage from the Honourable Mr. Seymour to his daughter Grace Fairfax, they had agreed in lamenting the refusal he had received, to which refusal he, her father, had never given a free consent. "We have had several consultations together, Marmaduke and I," said the old knight, "and we have seen our trusty friend and lawyer, Mr. Dennis, on the same subject; and I must inform you, Mr. Seymour," added he, with a calm and pleasant smile, "that if you are in the same mind towards Gracey, you have my free consent to woo and to win her." Mr. Seymour, of course, looked equally delighted and surprised, and had risen to approach Grace: a glance from her eye sent him back to his seat. While her father was speaking, a smile played for a moment over her expressive features; but it was succeeded by a look of the deepest thought. She said nothing, however, and her father continued: "It is, we have lately discovered, in the power of Marmaduke and myself to settle a very considerable marriage-por-

tion on our dearest Grace. We have made the proper arrangements for so doing."

"How! in what manner!" said Grace, eagerly.

"By what is no sacrifice, but a real gratification to us, my dear child; but do not be so inquisitive, Gracey; women never comprehend law papers."

"Women have common sense, dear father," said Grace, thoughtfully. "Do tell me what these arrangements are, which require no sacrifice, and yet need law papers. I begin to be very suspicious."

"My dear child, you are at present under age," replied the knight, with a solemnity of look and manner intended to be stern.

"Dear father," said Grace, "I am as old, though not half so steady, I allow, as my sister Lucy; and if I could be jealous of my Lucy, I think I might have reason, for she has been often admitted to the counsels of yourself and Marmaduke. I am sadly afraid, papa, that you will find me, after all, a disobedient child, for I cannot attend to any of your commands about Mr. Seymour till the questions which I shall put to Marmaduke, not to you, my dear father (for I will not presume to question you), be first answered. First, then, if all the consultations concern me so nearly, why have they been kept so secret from me, and why am I still to be kept in the dark about them?"

"Frankly, then," replied Marmaduke, "your

opinion was not asked, because (knowing you as we do) we were well aware that the only delicate way of making you a party to our plans was to arrange and decide on every step before we acquainted you with any thing."

"Arrange, and decide!" repeated Grace; "I like not those words: but another answer to another question, if you please. How are you enabled to procure this marriage portion for me? What is this gratification which you propose to yourselves?"

"My father," replied Marmaduke, "intends to reside with us on his small estate at Woodcote in Sussex."

"And Old Court, what is to become of Old Court?" inquired Grace.

"Oh, he will not wish to remain at Old Court; the establishment will be too large when his daughter is married!"

"And I am growing old, Gracey," exclaimed the knight, "and shall love to pass my time without the cares of housekeeping; sometimes with you and your good husband, and sometimes with my dear Clarice, when she and Harry are in Old England."

"But what is to become of Old Court? let me repeat that question till I have a clear, explicit answer. You would not shut it up?"

"Old Court has many admirers," said the knight.

"Lord Riverston would fain have bought it last year, but then I did not think of parting with it—"

"Parting, parting with it! did you say?" cried Grace, with a look of alarm, and a wild, eager manner: "but O no," and she smiled, "Old Court could not be sold; it is entailed."

"My dearest child," said the knight, "you are not aware that, with the full and free consent of my heir when of age, I am enabled to cut off the entail; and, to say the truth, we have gladly availed ourselves of this permission. Lord Riverston will take possession of Old Court at the end of next month. The place sells for a noble sum, I can assure you."

Grace spoke not a single word. For a moment her eyes were turned on her father and her brother, and then fixed vacantly on the ground; there was a dead silence for many minutes, except that once or twice Grace sighed deeply, very deeply. "Ah, now I understand it all!" she said, and rising up, she threw her arms round her father's neck, and wept on his bosom like a child. "Dear, dear papa," she said, as she wiped away her tears, "and dear brother," holding out her hand to Marmaduke, "how kind, how generous you are! Why am I surprised? why was I so dull and slow in comprehending? I might have known that it was just in some such noble manner you would act! Yes, yes! I

believe you, dearest father! I believe you, my brother! you need not assure me again, for I am sure you are about to do so. I believe this is no sacrifice to you; I believe it is a high and noble gratification to you both. You are not to be judged like common, selfish beings. But all these arrangements have been made for my happiness, have they not?"

"They have, my child," replied the knight.

"And what if I put my hand here" (and she placed her hand over her heart) "and assure you that if they are determined on, if Old Court is sold on my account, I shall be more wretched than I can express. Forgive me for saying so, Mr. Seymour," she looked at him as she spoke, "but if you could take me as your wife on such terms, I have been mistaken in your character. If you are he whom I—yes, I will speak the word—whom I love, you would never make such a poor-spirited, selfish creature your wife; and thus, father, you see, that if I am to have my portion on these terms, I must lose Mr. Seymour, at least his esteem and his love; I would rather, therefore, stand where I do in my lover's esteem, than be his rich and despicable wife. Really, my dear father, we are not so very much to be pitied, we are not so very wretched and hapless as you suppose, are we, Mr. Seymour? You see we can both smile. Don't look so very mourn-

ful, Lucy; a pretty person you to encourage them both in these plans of theirs, after telling us your story of sweet Patience. There was a trial, if you please; but here am I, a stout, hearty damsel, residing at Old Court; a happy daughter, a happy sister and niece, and, I do not forget you, Mr. Seymour, not very wretched when I think of your situation at present. You see, papa," she added, "Mr. Seymour is smiling again. Really, we are not to be pitied. These are the papers, are they not? what a number of them." She stood beside her father at his *escrutoire*, and took up first one and then another, reading the title to each as she did so: "'Deed for cutting off the entail;'" 'Letter from Lord Riverston;'" 'A letter from his lawyer;'" 'Estimate of the value of the woods of Old Court;'" 'Proposed marriage settlement!' and this, and this, and this, all on the same subject. I think I shall accept this paper entitled 'Proposed marriage settlement;' on this condition, that I may have the other papers in my keeping. Why do you smile, Marmaduke? you see I have taken them: my father does not object, I am sure. Wait, I must read this letter from Lord Riverston. Have you answered it or no? Give me a plain answer, have you answered it by return of post, as he requests?"

"It only came this morning," replied Sir Adam;

"but Marmaduke has written the copy of what I intended to send him: I dictated it this morning."

"Oh, yes! I see he has," said Grace, who had been turning over the papers. "Here is the very letter, or rather copy of a letter. Now, my dearest father, let me dictate, while you write. Nay, nay, you must consent: you must, indeed!" and, as she said this, she placed paper before her father, and a pen in his fingers, bending her face so near to his, as she stooped down, that, for a moment, his lips just touched her cheek. "Oh, my dear sir!" she continued, "I see you cannot get through business with expedition at all like mine. I will write the letter," she said; and, kneeling down, a short but decisive reply was soon written, in which Lord Riverston was informed, that Sir Adam Fairfax had finally determined not to part with Old Court. "And now for your signature, papa: I want nothing more. Well, then, I must really guide your hand. Thank you, thank you, dearest father! you are indeed kind. Lucy, dear Lucy! come and seal this letter.—There, take the old Fairfax signet. I will light the taper for you." Smiling very archly Grace twisted up the copy of the letter in which Old Court had been disposed of; with it she lighted the taper. "Are you looking for the bundle of papers, Marmaduke?" she said, a minute after, with a quiet smile.—"They

all dropt into the fire as I was lighting the taper for Lucy. I fear they are consumed by this time, red tape and all. Yes, yes!" she said, laughing, "there is not a fragment unconsumed: one light gauzy leaf is already sailing away up the chimney. Thank you, Lucy—I will direct the letter—now it is ready. Mr. Seymour," said Grace, and she resumed all her sweet and dignified gentleness, "you will, I am sure, give me this little proof of your regard; you will accept this proof of my respect—my perfect confidence towards you—'tis but a trifling favour. Take this letter from me, and see that it is sent: I am sure you will. And now, my own kind papa!" she continued; "now that I have burnt all those odious papers, I feel very like a culprit, and know that I deserve your anger. Indeed, indeed, I am ready to bear your frowns, and every hard word, very humbly and meekly. Dearest papa, you look so grave," she added; and Grace herself seemed really frightened. "I know I have been hasty and disobedient; and perhaps you think I have acted with too much levity. What! not a word! and still that cold, strange look! Speak to me, if even in anger, only speak!" and, saying this, Grace, who had been all the while at her father's side, sunk down on her bended knee, and bowed her head meekly, as if

awaiting and expecting some expression of her father's displeasure.

"Bless you! bless you, my darling!" cried the old knight. "Do you think I could have the heart to be angry with you? Thoughtful I was, and absent in mind, but never for a moment angry. God bless you, my own child—my sweet little Gracey! Why, you are trembling now; and if there is not a tear upon your poor cheek! Come, come! rise up and kiss me, and let me see you smile again, and we won't talk about leaving Old Court."

"Oh! Grace!" exclaimed Lady Clarice, who had hitherto sat perfectly silent, and apparently unmoved by every thing that passed, leaning her head on her hand, and looking down upon a book of old engravings, the leaves of which she had turned over and over, without, in fact, noticing a single print.—"Oh Grace! if you kneel and ask pardon for a fault, which is, after all, the excess of a virtue, I ought to humble myself in the dust," There was a general start and stare of astonishment throughout the room. "Yes," she said, lifting up her head, and looking round upon them all, while the hot blood rose to her face and dyed it with burning blushes, even till her eyes watered, and she could scarcely speak from emotion—"Yes, severe as this

struggle is, and agonizing to my proud, hard heart. I will hide what I feel no longer. I have been sitting, to outward appearance, careless and sullen all this time, but I have been, in fact, cut as with a knife to the very heart. Why should I mind to tell you this? why should I blush because your eyes are all fixed upon me, when I know that every heart has condemned me; for it is to me, and me alone, you must with justice attribute all the sorrow and disappointment of Grace, and her father, and her noble Mr. Seymour? It is I that have brought grief into this happy family! My heartless extravagance, my downright wicked selfishness, must answer for all. How kind you are, Grace, to come and take my hand, and whisper to me that you are happy, and that I must reproach myself no more! Let me speak!—let me at least confess what it is too late to repair; and seem no longer the same poor, vain trifler you have thought me—nay, that I have been, in fact, till this very day. Indeed, indeed, I am heartily ashamed of myself at last! And yet how can I promise to be much better than what I am? but I can promise to try; and with such examples as Grace and Lucy—kind, humble Lucy, of whom I have been so envious and jealous, I may perhaps improve.”

“Oh this will never do!” exclaimed Grace; “even aunt Amabel is weeping, and we are all

beginning to be melancholy and miserable. A charming Christmas party indeed we are! Upon my word! if you do not all get out of this mournful mood instantly—yes, instantly! I will pull down all the holly and Christmas greenery, and forbid any more of our evening entertainments, and lock up every musical instrument, and be a very mournful Lady of Misrule among you; nay, I do not know whether I will not put out all the fires, and permit no candles to be lighted after curfew-time, and send you to tell ghost stories in the chimney corner, till you shiver with fright as well as with cold. You look quite perplexed, aunt Amabel, and so do some others; but seriously—now remember, father! and remember, Clarice!—seriously! I mean what I say seriously! (though I smile a little). It is my command—no; that is not the word—my desire, my request, that from this moment we have no more of these dismal scenes—that we return to our usual habits, and our usual manners, all as cheerful as we ought to be, and all as pleasant as we can be.”

“And I,” said Lady Clarice, smiling through her tears, as Grace bent down to kiss her; “I, much less haughty, less selfish, and less impertinent than I have been. May I go to the nursery with you, dear Lucy?” added Lady Clarice; “I wish to have some conversation with you, after we

have seen your children." How lovely, and how very happy, Lucy looked, as, arm in arm with Lady Clarice, they quitted the room together!

"One word more to you, father," said Grace, "for there is still a little anxiety about your dear face—Mr. Seymour and I perfectly understand one another. We shall be very happy by-and-by, I dare say; and in the meantime"—and she paused—"we *are* very happy now."

I mentioned before, that, on her second visit to Old Court, the manners of Lady Clarice had been changed, from a good-natured playfulness, sometimes affected, but never unpleasing, to a sort of fine-lady haughtiness and languor, which both aunt Amabel and I held to be infinitely disagreeable. She now made another change to a manner that sits easily and gracefully upon her. She is simply what nature intended her to be; warm-hearted, enthusiastic, and very lively. A little melancholy and thoughtful she will be at times; and we, who know the cause, are glad to see her so, especially as her happiness could only spring from penitence, and deep thought. Lady Clarice has given better proofs than words of her heartfelt sorrow for her selfish extravagance. Not many days after the confession which she made so publicly, she came

to Grace in her dressing-room, and presented her with two thousand guineas, the sum she had just procured from the sale of her jewels. "Baubles," she called them, "which she had taken a dislike to, since she had learned of Grace and Lucy to prize what were the real ornaments of a woman."

"So we are again assembled for one of our pleasant evenings!" exclaimed aunt Amabel. "Really, I began to fear that we were to hear no more stories. I dare to say, my dear Clarice!" (she had lately received Lady Clarice very high into favour) "I dare to say, your story will be vastly pretty and lively, for you have often a charming flow of spirits; and I must own that just at present I think something cheerful and amusing would be very pleasant. My dear brother!" she continued, turning to Sir Adam, "what are you rising for, when we are all settled comfortably in our places, waiting for Clarice to begin?"

"You do not perceive," replied the knight, looking round, "that our party are not yet assembled. I was rising, if you must know, Amabel, because I feel a very cold draught of wind from that door, as it is opened by first one then another, and I am going to take my place next Lucy, in that warm corner."

"They are all here, my dear Clarice!" cried aunt Amabel impatiently; "they are all come at last; so just wait till I have picked up my scissors, which my brother, I suppose, swept off the table with his coat as he passed just now, and then begin."

" 'The Story of a Savoyard Peasant;' that is my title," said Lady Clarice.

"And a very pretty title it is!" exclaimed aunt Amabel, who seemed to think it necessary to reply for the whole party. "And now, my dear, we will have the story itself, if you please."

THE STORY OF A SAVOYARD PEASANT.

I AM but a poor villager. I am sure I don't know how to write my own history. All I can do is to tell you plainly what has happened to me during the last few years, for in the early part of my life I met with little worth mentioning. My father has lived very happily in our large comfortable cottage as long as he can remember: he has often told me so. Thanks be to God for it, he is very happy now, though old and infirm. I can see the shadow of his well-known form in the sunshine without the door, while I am writing within. He loves to sit for hours on the bench, enjoying the fresh air.

My own sweet wife sits beside him. I hear the drone of her spinning-wheel, and the music of her gladsome voice; and I know she is happy. My girl is nursing the baby. My boys are with the flocks on the green healthy mountains. I am, indeed, a happy man.

I was but a child when I first went abroad with our flocks and herds. For months I have wandered about all the long day in the summer-time upon the rich green grass, sleeping at night in some rude stone chalet. It is a glorious sight, on a clear summer's day, to look down from some point still higher, over the mountain pastures, dotted with thousands of cattle; surrounded on all sides by Alps of stupendous height, some of them dazzling the gaze with their fields of trackless snow, others shooting abruptly their fantastic peaks of naked granite into the deep blue sky. From thence the eye might look almost in vain for traces of man and his abiding-places. A few desolate chalets, a single herdsman, or the peep which some little winding valley, far, far beneath, admitted of the trees and corn-fields beyond; these were the only signs of what man calls the world: all besides was free magnificent nature. I cannot find words to describe to you the glorious beauty of our valleys and mountains. I cannot express, I can scarcely understand, the feelings with which they inspired me, even

then. But this will not interest you : I know the period of my life of which you wish to hear an account.—I was but a tall awkward boy of eighteen when I first met Pauline Charmey. It was in the month of August which I was wont to pass up among the mountain solitudes. There being a *jour de fête* in the valleys, my father sent me down to our village of Contamines, to visit my mother, and pass the day with her. I set off soon after sunrise, in high spirits, carrying a pail of the rich milk from the Alpine pastures, which I knew would be welcome in the valley. Sometimes I stopped to gather the bright flowers which grew in gay luxuriance close to the hard crisp snow spread over the Plan de Mont Jouet (I knew that a bouquet of the gentianella, and our large dark heartsease, would be acceptable to my sister), or to look round upon the sun, gradually rising above the mountains towards the east, and flooding the snows I had passed over with streams of golden light. I had nearly gained the foot of that rocky mountain, overhanging the lovely village of Notre Dame de la Gorge, when I overtook two maidens, driving a mule before them down the broad rocky steps which form the road into the Val de Montjoie. One of them I had often seen, but the other turned away her face as I passed them ; yet I had not gone many paces before I heard her and her companion

laughing loudly, and, I was sure, from the peculiar sound of their laughter, that they were laughing at me. I had not a very high idea of my own importance, but I must say that I did not like to be laughed at by two giddy girls. I began to feel much annoyed, and walked fast, but they seemed to be aware of my feelings, and I could still distinguish the sounds of their provoking mirth. The rocks echoed with their laughter, and the very air seemed in league with them, as it came blowing from the same direction. Very suddenly, however, their mirth ceased, or rather it was turned into cries and shrieks. I looked round, and they instantly began to call and beckon me towards them. I did not hesitate to obey. As I drew near, the girl whom I had known before called out loudly, "Eugene Bertot, run, run, or we shall lose the mule!" "Eugene Bertot," said her companion, catching my name for the first time, and repeating it as familiarly as if she had known me all her life—"Eugene Bertot, put down your milk-pail, and fly!" I put down the milk-pail, and sprang up with bounding steps to the spot where the girls were standing. The mule was, indeed, becoming very unruly, and well it might. One of its fore feet had slipped into a crevice of the rock, close to the edge of the precipice, and the poor beast had striven in vain to extricate itself till it became terribly frightened and unmanageable. With

some difficulty we contrived to save it, but not before I had met with a stout kick on one of my legs, which lamed me for some days.

My young companions, when we began again to descend the mountains, perceived my lameness, and I must own that I was delighted to see the stranger come up to me with a look of real concern. "I am sure you are very much hurt," she said with her sweet voice; "how pale you are! lean on me; and here, Marguerite, fasten his milk-pail to the empty pannier. Poor fellow," she added, turning quite round to her companion, "he is really very much hurt." I did not at first accept the offers of my fair friends, but they took the pail by force out of my hands, and seeing that my lameness increased, they insisted on supporting me by turns. I entered our cottage, leaning on the arm of Pauline, and followed by Marguerite, carrying the milk-pail. The two girls scarcely waited to speak to my mother and sister, but kissing their hands gaily to me, left the cottage, arm in arm.

That evening there was a dance in a meadow, belonging to the father of Marguerite, to which we were invited, and though I could not dance, I felt so anxious to see the charming Pauline again, that I accompanied my sister. They had already begun dancing when we arrived; so my sister sat down beside me under an old spreading chestnut-tree.

I saw immediately who was the best dancer. I had never seen any one move with the lightness and ease of Pauline Charmey; and though every eye was fixed upon her, she was all careless and unconscious of admiration. She appeared truly modest and unaffected. I always observed that, however wild and regardless of appearances she might be at other times, there was about her whole person and demeanour, when dancing, a quietness and artless propriety perfectly charming.

When the dance was finished, Pauline, followed by her partner, came up to the spot where we were sitting. "How delighted I am to see you both!" she said, her whole countenance brightening as she spoke. "You will dance, of course," she continued, addressing my sister, "though *you* cannot," and she nodded her head at me. "Here," she cried, looking round for the young man she had been dancing with, and who had retreated a few steps while she was speaking with us, "here is a very well behaved young man for your partner," and she presented the youth to my sister. Pauline took her place beside me, and though entreated frequently by the most pleasing and the best looking young men in the neighbourhood to dance with them, she steadily refused, and sat by me during the whole evening. Pauline Charmey was very beautiful. Her dark and laughing eyes were full

of expression; her lips were as red as the heart of a rose-bud, continually displaying teeth of the most dazzling whiteness; her hair, of the colour of a ripe hazel-nut, hung with a profusion of thick glossy curls round her face and neck, and almost to her shoulders; her figure was slight and tall, and her feet and hands remarkably well shaped. Much as I was dazzled by her beauty, I was more taken by the spirit that gave life and fascination to so much beauty. The playfulness of her manner; the expressions that seemed to chase each other, like the clouds and sunshine of summer, over her countenance; the earnestness, the downright heartiness with which she sometimes spoke; the right feeling which she showed so often, when persons, more consistently correct, doubted and wavered, and showed no feeling at all; such were the charms which gradually changed my admiration into the most devoted affection. The father of Pauline Charmey possessed a little farm near the village of Servos, at the entrance of the Vallée de Chamouni. He and my father had known one another when boys, though they had seldom met since their youth, owing to some little dispute which a few minutes' conversation would have cleared up. They respected each other; and some weeks after Pauline and I had settled that we would certainly marry, they met, with all their old friendliness of feeling

towards each other, to discuss the affair. Their interview was favourable to us, though we murmured at the decision which they made on a point, about which they were both entirely of one opinion, that Pauline and I were both very young, and must wait a whole year before the wedding should take place. I grew less discontented at the decision of our parents, when I found that Pauline was permitted to pay long and frequent visits to her friend Marguerite and to my sister. At length the long winter was over—the summer came, and I went up with the herds into the mountains with a very desolate feeling about my heart. Many a time I turned back, and looked wistfully to the trees and fertile fields of the smiling Val de Montjoie. When the valley was quite shut out from my view, I felt much relieved, but still I sighed most dolefully as I passed along to our rude chalets; and during the many weeks which I remained among the mountains, I tended my flock with a most melancholy countenance and a very heavy heart. The day after I came down from the mountain pastures, I hastened to the dwelling of my beloved Pauline. Alas, she was not there! Her kind-hearted father told me that she had been suddenly called away the day before to attend on a rich uncle, her godfather, who resided at St. Maurice. I would have followed her immediately, but her parents persuaded me to

wait a short time till we might hear from her, delicately hinting that the presence of a stranger, in the house of a dying person, might be deemed obtrusive. I agreed, heartily vexed at feeling that I could not in common reason do otherwise; and as I could not bear the farm-house when my sweet Pauline was absent, I set off with slow, unwilling steps on my return home. Our marriage-day was fixed for the second of October, and I tried to content myself with the knowledge that my happiness was not very far distant. Week after week, however, passed away, and I received no letter, not even a message from Pauline. At last there came a report, a sort of vague rumour, and nobody could tell me how it came, that Pauline was going to be married to another person. Though I could not believe it, I was maddened at the mere mention of such an idea. I hastened to her friend Marguerite. She had also heard it, but was about to set off to the farm of Pauline's father, Pauline having agreed to return and meet her there on that very day. We went together. Pauline did not return, and her parents then confessed that *they* had heard some improbable account of her approaching marriage. They had heard also, they added, that her uncle was recovered, and had become so fond of Pauline, that he had publicly declared her his heiress. A new suitor, much favoured by the uncle, had been

spoken of, but they could not believe that there was any truth in the report, and they had determined to mention nothing about it to me, till Pauline herself was present to prove its falsehood. Marguerite interrupted my conversation with Pauline's parents, by urging me to set off the next day for St. Maurice, and, till I had seen Pauline herself, not to perplex myself with such malicious and improbable stories. We all agreed not to converse any more on the subject; though I continually forgot that we had done so, and gave language to the thoughts and fancies which alone occupied my mind.

It was quite dark when I entered St. Maurice, but I had no difficulty in finding the abode of Pauline's rich uncle. My heart died within me when I saw lights blazing through most of the windows, and heard the sounds of music and dancing. "Can it be possible?" I cried aloud. "Is Pauline really married?"—No, she was not married.—I entered the house; the door, indeed, was partly open; I stopped for a few moments in the passage leading to the room where the dancers were assembled. Never had Pauline looked more beautiful. Her own modest innocent expression was on her face. The other persons in the room were dressed in the modern fashion; she was alone in the simple Savoyard gown, such as she had

always worn, with its stomacher of rose-coloured ribands, and her large golden cross upon her bosom. She looked round and smiled. My glance followed her smile, and I then noticed her partner. He was almost as handsome as herself. I could not speak, I could scarcely move, but my first impulse was to enter the room, and tell her to her face she was false. I loved her too well even then to put her to shame. The hot tears gushed from my eyes, as with a violent struggle I turned away. The door leading into the garden, behind the house, was open; thither I went; and when I had rushed to the darkest corner of it, I flung myself down upon the cold earth, and wept without restraint. My tears softened my heart.

We met in a little room towards the garden, and neither of us spoke for some minutes; at last, Pauline raised her eyes, and said in a low, deep voice, "Eugene, I am guilty; and I will not deny it. I am unworthy of your true affection; but I am glad you are come; I am awakened to some sense of my shameful conduct. Awakened, do I say? I have felt it like a sting in my heart all the time; and, although I love another, I will from this moment renounce him. I solemnly promise this.—I have once broken my word, but indeed I will never do it again—I am ready to set off with you immediately, and to return to my father's

house; the marriage may be hastened—I will, I will—” ere she could say more, she had fallen to the ground, and when I raised her, I thought that she had fainted. I would have called for assistance, but she opened her eyes, and faintly entreated me to wait a little while, and call no one. She sat down on the ground, and asked me to open the window. “Don’t be alarmed for me!” she added, observing how wretched I was; “I shall soon be well. I have not been used to dance before in a hot room. Oh no!” she said, looking upwards, and fervently clasping her hands together, “I do not feel enough, I do not feel as deeply as I ought to feel my infamous conduct.” Pauline would have said more, but I conjured her to go to bed, and I promised to hear whatever she might wish to say on the following morning. I, at length, prevailed on her to leave me. The struggle was, at the time, to me, as a struggle between life and death, but I felt, from my soul, that I ought to make it—Pauline no longer loved me—it struck me that she had never really loved me, and I loved her too truly to make her miserable. That night I wrote a short letter to her, in which I dissolved our engagement, and bound myself by a solemn vow, never to see her again, never to return to my family till she was married to the man whom she loved.

Before daybreak I was far from St. Maurice;

from thence I had also written to my father, informing him of my decision, and begging him to forgive the resolution I had made not to return home till I should hear that Pauline was married. I directed my steps towards the Vallée d'Entremont, which leads to the pass of St. Bernard, and stopped at the little town of Liddes, resolving not to go very far from St. Maurice, that I might be able to hear the sooner of Pauline's marriage. I was strong and healthy, and accustomed to work, and therefore sooner enabled to hire myself as a herdsman to a rich farmer. For many months I heard nothing of Pauline Charmey; but my conscience was light, and that was certainly a great help. How cheerlessly came on the dull, dreary winter! it brought back a gloom on my spirits. I had not much work to do, and my blood seemed to stagnate within me, as I loitered about the deserted fields. I began to murmur in my heart at what I thought so severe a lot, when a circumstance occurred that roused me to a very different state of existence. One bleak, dark morning in December, I set off on a message for my master to his brother, who resided at St. Pierre. The sleet drove full in my face, and I heartily felt for those who were obliged to be abroad in such pitiless weather, without being so well able to bear it as myself. I walked onward, deep in melancholy thoughts, till

I came to a little oratory by the wood-side. The storm had increased, and I, therefore, determined to seek a shelter there for a short time, and eat my breakfast. As I approached the open entrance, a large dog, that was lying there, rose up, walked slowly towards me, and looked up in my face, and then returned quietly into the chapel. When I entered, I saw that the dog had laid himself down beside a female, who was kneeling with her face towards the rude altar. On hearing the sound of my steps, she looked timidly round, and then quietly resumed her devotions. She seemed, to me, as if too lost in thought to remember that she had kneeled down to pray. For minutes she remained almost motionless, her clasped hands fell before her, and her face upon her bosom. Once or twice she looked up, and shook her head slowly, as if in unconscious wretchedness; and then again her head sunk down, and deep sighs stole from her bosom. At last the maiden rose from her knees, she went to the entrance of the chapel, but perceiving the violence of the storm, turned back, and sat down on the corner farthest from me, with the dog at her feet. When I turned again towards my companion, I was struck by the ghastly paleness of her face, and asked her some few questions. I wished to know whence she had come, and whither she was going, and requested leave to bear her com-

pany through the storm, for the snow was now falling fast, and I knew that the road would be dangerous. She stared at me as I spoke, and seemed scarcely to comprehend what I said, but when she did comprehend me, she darted on me a look of mingled fear and displeasure, rose up, and stole away to the entrance of the oratory. Once again she looked round at me with a stare of horror upon her wasted countenance, and then rushed out into the storm. I saw that she was terrified, that I had, unknowingly, aroused her fears, and for some little time I remained at the spot where she had been sitting. When I left the oratory, I saw her, followed by her dog, enter a dark wood of pines at some distance.

It was about three hours after I had lost sight of her, that I was returning by the same road. The storm had ceased, but the snow lay so deep upon the earth, that I proceeded with great difficulty. A solemn and unnatural stillness reigned around, and one dull, unbroken mass of whitish clouds was spread over the whole sky. Not a breath of wind disturbed the old pine wood, in which the maiden had disappeared. I passed the little oratory, and as I passed it, I thought within myself of what might have befallen her. I had not proceeded much farther when the dead stillness was broken by a low and continued howl. At first I

could not exactly discover from whence the howling came, but on calling out it became louder. With some difficulty I approached the spot. Once or twice I sunk deep into the snow and scarcely recovered myself, for every step was uncertain. In one place the snow had been disturbed by the fall of a body, and I perceived there a few drops of blood. A little farther on were the objects which I sought. The faithful dog had dragged forward his mistress out of the snow, to a little nook covered with green turf and overshadowed by a ledge of rock. There lay the poor stranger, who had fled so fearfully from me, to all appearance dead. The dog was stretched almost across her body, as if anxious to keep up some animal warmth within her. I lost not a moment in endeavouring to restore her. I wrapped round her slight form my own warm cloak, and, supporting her head on my knees, rubbed her temples and hands with snow. Her head had been cut in her fall, but the cold had stopped the bleeding. Warmed by the heat of my limbs, on which her head rested, the wound began to bleed again, and then life gradually awoke through her frame. She revived, and looked up in my face. She was too weak to remove herself from my arms, or I think she would have done so; but I felt her tremble as she lay there, and I saw the tears trickle slowly from her

eyes. She spoke, but so feebly, that her words were inaudible. At last, however, with a look of the most touching grief, she seemed to appeal to me for protection, and said, "Pity me, feel for me." I looked up towards heaven, and declared that I would. She gazed again in my face for some moments, and then said, "I believe you, and will trust you." I succeeded in removing her to Liddes, where I placed her under the care of a poor but honest widow.

In the space of few weeks, she recovered ; but though she told me that she fully relied on my assurances, I saw that she felt under a restraint in my presence, and that she was uneasy while dependent in any way upon me. She was scarcely well enough to undertake the service, when I found that she had hired herself as an attendant to the sister of the Curé of Liddes, who had visited her during her illness. From that time, however, all went on well with Lillie. She became an altered creature, her peace of mind and health returned, and she no longer shunned me, or seemed uneasy in my presence as before. She loved to call me her friend and her brother, and often consulted me as such. Still she never spoke of her past life, and as I was then unwilling to tell my own story to any one, I could not expect that she would gratify my curiosity. All I could learn was, that she

had suffered from the wickedness of one of my own sex. I became daily more attached to the gentle Lillie, and sometimes, when conversing with her, I wondered how I could have loved one so totally different to her as Pauline. I was waiting to hear of the marriage of the faithless Pauline, and becoming daily more and more convinced that happiness was to be found without her, when the mistress of Lillie died suddenly. The night after her death Lillie sent to beg that I would meet her in the Curé's orchard. I went there, and she told me that she came to meet me for the last time; that she was to set off the morning after the funeral to a convent of nuns near Soleure, to the abbess of which her late mistress had recommended her. She hoped to be able to devote herself there to a religious life, and to leave the world for ever. I heard her in silence. She thought me insensible: I was any thing but insensible. She spoke to me in a tone of tender reproach, and put a little book into my hands, saying, "When I am gone, this may remind you of me." It was an old copy of *Thomas à Kempis sur l'Imitation de Jésus Christ*, which I had often found her reading. Still I did not speak; and Lillie took my hand with a tenderness which she had never shown till then. I don't know how it was, but before we parted Lillie and I had agreed that she should not go to Soleure—

sooth to say, she had promised to fill the vacancy left by Pauline, of my former engagement to whom I informed her, for the purpose of drawing forth her own sad history. She had been the only child of a rich peasant, a widower, whose property was suddenly laid waste by an inundation of the Drance. A young man, who had passed the chief part of his life as a soldier, had returned to his native village when Lillie was the richest maiden there. She had been betrothed to him, but when her old father sunk under his losses, and left her poor and unprovided for, her lover had made proposals to which she could not listen. She left her native valley, and wandered away to St. Pierre, hoping to find a friend in a relation who lived there. Her hopes had been bitterly disappointed, and when I first saw her she was friendless, and forsaken by all the world.

Lillie and I were married.—I was now anxious to return home and present my modest bride to my parents; but not having yet heard of the marriage of Pauline, I determined to go at once to St. Maurice, and take my wife with me; and thence to proceed with her to Contamines. We arrived at St. Maurice early in a beautiful summer evening, and I felt, as I entered the town, how much better the happiness was which Providence had bestowed upon me, than that which I had sought for myself, when Pauline had been the object most desired on

earth. I felt how imperfectly I had known my own heart, as I drew my Lillie nearer to my side. Pauline had commanded my love, she had not seemed to need my protection or guidance, she had rather sought to lead me. The effect of her beauty and manners had been dazzling and startling. My Lillie was perfectly feminine; a being not made to be admired first, and loved afterwards, but to be loved, devotedly loved, at once. She had no idea of display, no thought to charm others. She seemed to seek only the love of her husband.

Pauline had been married within a week after my departure from St. Maurice. Her husband and she had lived happily together for a few months after their marriage, but the man was unprincipled, and had neglected her for the company of a woman as abandoned as himself. His intrigue had been conducted with much secrecy, but Pauline had discovered it, and her violent indignation had estranged him still more. She had at first shunned all society, and shut herself up in sullen grief; but suddenly she changed her mode of conduct, and gave herself up to amusements in which she had no enjoyment. She seemed the most thoughtless among the gay and dissipated. Rumours of her misconduct, which had no foundation but in her imprudence, were circulated, and believed by those who envied her. Pauline laughed at them, and cared

not, for she felt herself innocent. Her husband now became jealous. Pauline had done her utmost to make him so; but she would not discontinue the provocation. She answered his reproaches with smiles. He commanded, and she positively refused to obey him.

It was just at the time when the misery of this violent couple was at its height, that Lilie and I entered St. Maurice. The house in which Pauline and her husband resided was at the entrance of the town. As we approached it in the quiet of the evening, I heard the sound of voices loud in anger. We had advanced but a few steps, when an old man, with white hair, rushed from the door, and seeing me, cried out, "Come in, come at once, or there will be murder." I obeyed the call, and my wife followed me. I was in time to stop the uplifted arm of the furious husband, and my Lilie lifted tenderly from the ground the terrified and fainting wife. As soon as she found that her husband was restrained, the woman suddenly recovered herself, and loaded him with abuse so vile and unwomanly, that I shuddered as I recognised the voice of the once sweet-tempered Pauline Charney. The man seemed stung to madness by her words, and struggled so violently in my grasp, that he escaped and sprung forward. At that moment

my Lillie, pale and trembling, flung herself before him; she cried aloud to him for pity, and at once the man was motionless. The room was now crowded with persons, and Lillie looked round timidly and fearfully for me. I was at her side, and rising up, she clung trembling and weeping to my arm. We quitted the house, and as we went, she whispered—"The husband of Pauline is he who was so false and cruel to me."

THE HUNTER'S SONG,

SUNG BY GRACE.

Give me the naked heavens above,
The broad bare heath below,
A merry glance from her I love,
My fleet hound, and my bow.
I crave no red gold for my pouch,
No wine-cup mantling high,
Nor brodered vest; nor downy couch,
On which the careworn sigh:
With conscience clear, and steadfast mind,
My cares I whistle to the wind.

If I am hungry, I can wing
The wild bird as he flies;
Or thirsty, yonder crystal spring
My sparkling draught supplies.
The deer must yield his dappled coat
My vig'rous limbs to don;
The heron his dark plume to float
My fearless brows upon.
I am content—canst thou say more,
With pride, and pomp, and treasured store?

EVENING THE FIFTH. ---

“WHAT are we to do this evening?” said Grace; “since the gentlemen dine out, I suppose we can have no story. Indeed, from what I can learn, no one has written for us but Marmaduke. We have but one more evening’s entertainment.”

“I see no reason,” said Mrs. Fairfax, “why we should not do what we can to make the evening pass pleasantly, though half our party are absent. Can no one *tell* a story?”

“I cannot, I am sure,” said Lady Clarice.

“Why, aunt Amabel,” exclaimed Grace, holding up her finger, and playfully scolding her; “Aunt Amabel! for shame! for shame! to sit so quietly there, pretending not to hear the question, and answering not a word, when you know that you have the most charming store of old tales and ballads at your tongue’s end. I could mention, I will not say how many stories, that I have heard you tell, ever since I can remember bringing my little stool close to your knee, and leaning with my elbow on your lap, while you held us, all of us,

Marmaduke, Harry, and me, quite entranced with delighted attention."

"My dear child," replied mistress Amabel, "I did not think of telling you one of my old rambling stories; for though they might do very well for children, I should fear to make you smile were I to tell them now."

"Oh, no, no; do pray tell us one of your stories, dear aunt Amabel," cried Clarice; "we are all still children enough to be very attentive, and very much pleased; besides, you are almost bound to tell a story, if you do not write one."

"Oh, don't talk of my writing! any thing but writing, dear children: but you have heard my stories so often, Grace."

"And could hear them as often again, dear aunt; besides, Lucy and Clarice have never heard them."

"Very well then, as the gentlemen are not present; but pray be very notable; take out your work, children; for I will not have you idle while I play the part of an old gossip to amuse you; and as for me, I shall manage to do many yards of knotting, and be as busy with my fingers as my tongue."

AUNT AMABEL'S STORY OF
MONICA.

" My love (quoth young Cordelia then)
Which to your Grace I owe,
Shall be the duty of a child,
And that is all I'll show."

Ballad of King Leir.

" I 'VE heard my grandmother tell the story very often," said aunt Amabel; " for it happened soon after she was left a widow—at least some years after the death of my grandfather: and he died about a year before Charles the Second was restored to the throne. She resided all the year round at Old Court; and, indeed, never went to London during the reign of that profligate monarch, though many of her family were much about court, and she herself received many intimations that her appearance would be hailed with pleasure by all the royal party. But Lady Elizabeth Fairfax was a person of remarkable modesty and discretion, and though eminently fitted by the noble character of her beauty and accomplishments to shine among the highest persons of the land, she preferred devoting her youthful widowhood to the care of her children and of her father, I should say father-in-law, for I speak of old Sir Harry Fairfax, who survived his son many long years, and resided till

his death at Old Court, with his daughter-in-law and her blooming children.—Lady Elizabeth had not long left off her mourning when a gentleman and his daughter came to reside at St. Austin's. Now, I must first tell you where St. Austin's is; for the place has been pulled down, and few persons can point out even the spot where the house stood, In the midst of an old wood, about two miles from this house (my brother bought the land only the other day) is an open space some hundred yards in length and about half as broad. There still remain the four walls of a little chapel, now a crumbling ruin. Immediately behind this chapel rises a tall pile of broken rocks (our grey Kentish rocks), masses of which protrude in many places through the grassy carpet of the open glade. A rough road still winds up through a broad cleft in these lofty rocks; and, after many turnings, was formerly stopped by a stone wall, which extended from one side of the ravine to the other. A small gate in this wall formerly opened into a sort of court, formed on three of its sides, by the natural and abrupt walls of the rock, and on the fourth by that wall of stone-work. On the left side of this court a broad flight of steps led to a little plain or platform, and there stood the house. 'Twas, in fact, nothing but a square stone hunting tower of older times, which had been kept up in tolerable repair by Lord N——, to

whom the place belonged, and in which one of his tenants, who farmed the land adjoining, had resided. The house had been vacant only a few weeks when Mr. De Clifford came there; and as it had been the occasional residence of the N—— family, his coming to the old place was not deemed extraordinary by the few who heard of it. Lady Elizabeth became acquainted with these two persons, I believe, during an illness of the gentleman, when his daughter sent to Old Court to request some fruit for her father. There was something about Miss De Clifford, or Monica, as they called her, which made her a favourite with all at Old Court. I have no idea that her personal appearance was very pleasing, nor did my grandmother describe her as intellectual or clever, or of a lively imagination; in short, there was nothing of the heroine about her; she was simply a good, obliging little creature, quiet and humble in her manners, and sincerely grateful for the slightest attention paid either to her father or herself. Mr. De Clifford was the very reverse of all this: proud, reserved, but at the same time the most finished gentleman, or, I suppose one might say fop, in his dress and manners; very handsome as to person and feature; but there was at times a glance of subtlety in his eyes, and a sensual expression about his mouth, which almost unconsciously prejudiced

Lady Elizabeth against him. Indeed, though his manners were so polished, and he himself so well informed on every common topic of conversation, that he was able to make himself a very agreeable companion, he would not have been admitted to Old Court by its discreet mistress, had she not felt a sincere esteem for his daughter. It was rumoured in the neighbourhood that Monica received the unkindest treatment from her father: some even went so far as to say that he had been known to strike her. Yet Monica had nothing of the victim in her appearance: the good humour, nay, I might almost say, the perfect, but humble happiness of her manner, would have led one to suppose that hers was the kindest of fathers. Lady Elizabeth told me that she had once certainly noticed what appeared to have been the mark of a blow on her shoulder. She had gone into her room when Monica was undressing, one night that she slept at Old Court—she supposed that Monica must have read her looks, for, notwithstanding the laughing and careless manner she instantly assumed, her face was suffused with the deepest blushes when their eyes met, and Monica instantly threw a shawl around her.

“Lady Elizabeth could not understand why Mr. De Clifford and his daughter always declined visiting any family but that of Old Court, where they

seldom met any other guests besides themselves, while many of the neighbouring families continually entertained large and splendid parties. Mr. De Clifford had his reasons, as you will soon hear, for secluding himself.

"It was in the depth of the winter, a cold, bleak night in January, just such another as this evening, when Lady Elizabeth, her father, and the rest of the family were sitting in this very apartment. Mr. De Clifford and his daughter were of the party, for my grandmother had invited them to pass a few days in her hospitable mansion, deeming St. Austin's, just then, a very desolate abode for the young and cheerful Monica. The night was very cold, as I was saying, and they had drawn out the immense folding-screen half across the room, and taken every precaution against the cold draughts of wind, of which there were but too many about the room; for Old Court at that time was much in want of repairs, and by no means kept up in the order it now is, since my worthy brother has become master here.

"It happened," continued aunt Amabel, "that at that time it was as common a custom at Old Court as it seems now, for one of the party to read aloud for the amusement of the others. It was growing very near the time of retiring to rest, but they were still deeply engaged in a volume of

Milton, when Sweetheart, a very favourite dog of Sir Harry's, who had been lying asleep at his master's feet, suddenly pricked up his ears, and disturbed the whole party by his barking. This roused their attention to other sounds, and they soon perceived, by the repeated ringing of the bell at the great gate, by the slamming of doors, &c., that some unexpected visitors had arrived. 'I will inquire into the cause of this disturbance at so late an hour, madam, if you will permit me?' said Mr. De Clifford, rising up with all his usual well-bred self-possession; and then he quietly left the room, as if about to return immediately. The cause was soon discovered. Mr. De Clifford had not been absent more than a minute, when an officer of justice entered the room. He looked round him, and seeing a chair vacant, immediately inquired whither its occupier had fled?

" 'I did not know,' replied Lady Elizabeth, 'that the gentleman who has just left the room had fled anywhere; but you, sir, should be better able than we to answer your own question, for you must have passed him in the passage.'

" The man rushed from the room, and not a corner of this large mansion was left unsearched. It was never discovered how Mr. De Clifford had escaped. In the confusion that prevailed throughout the house, Monica was also soon after miss-

ing. The poor girl was brought back to Old Court the next morning. They had found her wandering about in the neighbourhood of St. Austin's, with the vain hope of being able to join her father. She was horror-struck when told that her father was not only a spy, but one of the conspirators in the Titus Oates' plot, as it is called, which infamous imposture was then beginning to cause a general sensation throughout the country. The man, I believe, was a spy (and that was bad enough), and thoroughly unprincipled, but knew no more about any conspiracy than many others then suspected and accused. He was, in fact, as we afterwards learned, an English gentleman by birth, of the old cavalier party; who had passed the chief part of his life at the French court, and ruining himself by profligacy and extravagance, had been induced by the French government, at the time war was so doubtful between the two nations, to return to his own country as a spy. His fine presence and elegant manners were peculiarly adapted to favour his vile designs, and he had accordingly resided about the court for nearly a year unsuspected by anyone, receiving from time to time, no one knew how, the most splendid suits in the Parisian fashion, and returning, by the same secret channel, a full and detailed account of every proceeding in English politics, or, in other

words, in the apartments of the Duchess of Portsmouth. We all know the absurd love of our honest English folk for the fashions of French dress. Common as it now is (indeed, my dear Clarice, I am not speaking at you), common as it now is, 'twas then a perfect infatuation, and not a vain and painted madam at Whitehall could rest satisfied till she had decked herself out à la mode de Paris. As for the men of the time, they were just as bad a set of vain, effeminate coxcombs. Mr. De Clifford was, therefore, almost as great a favourite with the king, and his courtiers, and his light wanton ladies, as that unprincipled Count De Grammont, whose influence must have been very great, for he won the affections of one of the only virtuous women at court, La belle Hamilton, as they called her; a simpleton of a girl, in my opinion, to care for such a poor, prating puppet.

“ At last the real object of this Mr. De Clifford's sojourn at the court was discovered, and a fine disturbance it caused. He was seized when sitting at cards in the king's presence; but though fully awake to his danger, with a presence of mind (I call it impudence) quite astonishing, he boldly challenged the king to protect him, appealing to his honour and courtesy as a gentleman. The monarch, who had strange notions on some subjects, and but little love for the character of his

people, was really pleased with the man's effrontery, and would willingly have protected him, had not his grace of Ormond, and one or two other noblemen, represented the disgraceful impolicy of such a mode of conduct. Charles the Second, if you remember, acted in just as unaccountable a manner towards the notorious Colonel Blood, who stole the crown from the Tower. He even allowed the insolent villain five hundred pounds a year, no one knew why. Well, as I was saying, De Clifford was taken, and was to have been tried for his life, but the thoughtless monarch, influenced by that French lady of his, the Duchess of Portsmouth, who had known De Clifford in France, managed to allow him an opportunity of escaping. Lord N., who was the agent employed by the royal party, gave him permission to take up his abode for a short time at St. Austin's. There he was desired to remain as secluded as possible till the affair had blown over, and he might proceed to the coast without fear of discovery. To St. Austin's he came, with his daughter, and he gladly availed himself of the invitations he received to Old Court, supposing that he ran little risk of being discovered in the domestic and quiet family party there; for Lady Elizabeth heard but little of, and inquired still less into the passing affairs of the great world, and very probably De

Clifford would have got away quietly to France, had not that pretended conspiracy set the nation in a ferment. De Clifford was known to be a Papist, and some of the very persons who had connived at his escape as a spy were the first to give information against him. Such were some of De Clifford's adventures in England. How he got off at last, as I told you before, I could never discover. Monica remained some weeks at Old Court, and became a greater favourite than ever with her friends there. The poor girl had never known her mother, and her father had only taken her to live with him when he came to England. She had been brought up from her earliest childhood at a little miserable convent in a close street of the city of Amiens, with no companions but an old abbess and a few simple-minded but illiterate nuns; from whom she learned to excel in many kinds of needlework, to make some common kinds of confectionary, and to mix medicines, and spread plasters for those who were sick among the poor: she read and spoke both English and French, but she had no other accomplishments. You may easily imagine how insipid the society of such a person as Monica was to her vain, talented, but heartless father; how he despised her when she betrayed her total ignorance of that world for which alone he lived; when she related the dull but marvellous

legends with which the abbess occasionally regaled her admiring auditors, or the smart sayings of sister Caliste, the wit of the convent, at which every body, even old Babette the portress, could not help laughing: in short, all the dull chit-chat of some six or seven dull old creatures, who were always shut up in a little cloistered court, into which every window of the convent looked, with a narrow slip of garden behind for their recreation, surrounded by high walls, and containing a few flowers, and a few pot-herbs, and cabbages enough to serve the establishment for half the year. Such was the place that Monica described in terms of delight, the liveliest in her vocabulary.

“De Clifford had not, in fact, seen his daughter for more than ten years, when he ordered her to join him in Flanders, from whence he intended to pass over to England. He had left Monica a beautiful child. Her mother had been beautiful; and he expected a creature of dazzling loveliness; but beautiful children do not always grow up according to their early promise.

“He was astonished, disappointed, nay, almost enraged, when a little sturdy maiden, with a round, happy face, entered the room where he was sitting. He took her at first for his daughter’s attendant; but he soon found that no other Monique De Clifford was about to make her appearance.

“He was indeed thoroughly vexed and disappointed; for he had depended on the beauty and fascinations of his daughter to increase his popularity at the English court. He had provided, at some considerable expense, dresses in the newest Parisian fashion, and some fine jewels for her, little doubting that, with a few of his instructions, however unformed her manners might be, she would soon acquire the address and manner of a person of distinction. But here was a subject for his designs!—a little, old-fashioned, countrified wench, with her uncurled hair bound round her forehead with a black riband, and dressed according to the taste of her Carmelite friends. Monica rushed into the room, and seemed as if she wished to throw her arms about his neck and kiss him; but the stare with which her father surveyed her made her stop and open her eyes widely, and drop a short curtsy, while she asked if he could tell her where to find her father, Mr. De Clifford.

“‘My name is De Clifford, child,’ he replied, and he coldly held out his hand, perceiving that she was indeed his daughter. Monica seized it and covered it with kisses, and, falling on her knees, asked his blessing, as she had been used to do with the old abbess.

“‘There, there: get up, girl,’ he cried; ‘I don’t

understand you. I'm sure I wish you well, if that's what you mean.'

"Monica rose at once, and said to herself, that, no doubt, her father knew what was right. She wondered to see what a noble-looking gentleman he was; and having stood before him in silence for some minutes, in which he took no farther notice of her, but looked at her through his glass, and once or twice shrugged up his shoulders, as much as to say, 'Was there ever such a cub seen?' she quietly sat herself down on a low window-seat at the farther end of the room, threw off her large hat, took out her knitting-needles, and was soon hard at work, humming all the while a little vulgar French air, in her unconscious happiness. Her gaiety of manner displeased De Clifford as much as any thing. He could make no impression on her feelings: he threw out hints and sarcasms, he tried to wound her feelings of self-love, to irritate her temper: she would be happy in spite of him. She seemed too obtuse to take his hints, she had no self-love that he could wound, her temper was not to be irritated, she only smiled, and seemed more humble. He pitied her for a poor-spirited fool. In fact, he wished to get rid of her, and thought of sending her back to her little convent at Amiens. He determined to tell her so; but

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while he was beginning to speak on the subject to her, some little kindly feeling softened his heart, and he concluded by merely giving her the choice to go on with him to England, or to return to Amiens.

“ ‘She would do which he pleased,’ she meekly replied.

“ ‘But ’tis not for me, but for yourself to decide, child! You may take your choice.’

“ ‘That ’s soon made,’ she said, betraying a delight, the feeling of which surprised, as much as her manner of expressing it disgusted, him. She jumped up, and clapped her hands, and exclaimed, ‘I shall go with you, my father; I am sure of that!’

“ And now, that he had determined to let her go, he hired an affected French waiting-maid to attend on her, and sent her up to her chamber to be dressed in her Parisian clothes, with strict orders to submit implicitly to the taste of Lisette.

“ Mademoiselle Lisette kept the poor little maiden for hours under her hands; and Monica was so good-humoured and obedient, that, notwithstanding her awkwardness, and the little possibility there was of dressing out such a face and figure to do her any credit, the pert French girl could not help almost loving her.

“ ‘No, no! any thing but that,’ said Monica, at last, as Lisette, having laced her till she could

scarcely breathe, and tortured her hair into little, little ringlets, and long love-locks, and, in short, completed every tedious mystery, was about to tint her cheeks from a little china vase which she took from the dressing-case. 'If that's rouge, don't touch me with it; I will not have a painted face for any one.' Lisette smiled, replaced the rouge, and putting a kerchief of the finest cambric, strongly scented with orange flowers, into her hands, already covered with gloves of the softest white kid seamed with gold, pronounced her toilet finished, and introduced her again to her father.

"Monica did all she could to become her new style of dress, and she listened with profound attention to all the lectures of her father and her waiting-maid. She saw it was her father's wish for her to become a fine lady; and as she felt it right to prefer his will to her own, she tried very hard to please him. But as there are some persons who are born with a natural elegance and grace, and whom not the meanest attire can make otherwise, so there are, we all know, others, even of the highest birth, of the most gentle blood, on whom education, dress, and all the settings-off of art, will never bestow what nature has denied. Good little Monica was one of these. Hints, lectures, lacing, dressing,—nothing would effect the desired change. There *would be* a swing in her walk, a twitch as

she was sitting, a raising of her hand with some awkward gesture just at the time when her father saw that some one was observing her. She could not recline in her chair languidly or even carelessly with any thing like grace; she sat stiff, and bolt upright, or she crossed one knee over the other; and the more he lectured, and the more intently she listened and strove with herself to obey him, the more utterly bewildered she became. He tried the plan of saying nothing, of leaving her to herself. He left her on the deck of the vessel in which they were sailing to England, with a young officer sitting near her; he came back and found her conversing very quietly with him. On resuming his seat the conversation turned to some subject which could not interest Monica, but which had so much attraction for him, that for a time his attention was turned from every thing else. A smile on the face of his companion aroused him; he followed the direction of the young man's eyes: Monica had whipped her favourite knitting-needles out of her pocket (for she had contrived to carry them with her), and as she worked, her thoughts had wandered back to her friends at the Carmelite convent, and the little vulgar tune, which he had often heard and forbidden, was but too audible. De Clifford thought he had never seen her look so happily

vulgar; but he was even more shocked when her ball of worsted fell, and rolled away to the other side of the vessel; and when Monica, laughing and tumbling, crawled and scrambled after it, uttering several little exclamations, equally expressive of her amusement and vexation, but fit only for the lips of some unmannered serving-wench. The young man rose up to assist her; but De Clifford sprang forward, and seizing not only the ball, but the hated needles, and the unfinished work, flung the whole concern into the sea. For a moment Monica was astonished; she looked from her favourite knitting-needles (the last present of the abbess) to her father; but he was her father—that was quite enough. It was her duty, not only to do, but to love his pleasure: besides, he did not know—how should he?—that the knitting-needles were the present of her beloved abbess. She sat down with her usual contented countenance; nay, smiled with wonder and delight, as the white cliffs of the English coast now first rose upon her view.

“ From this time De Clifford gave up all intention of ever producing Monica as his daughter to the fashionable and splendid circles in which he shone so conspicuously. He satisfied himself by shutting her up, and making a sort of drudge of her. He made her wash his fine and delicate laces

and linen, and prepare French dishes for him when he dined at home. He employed her to copy letters, and, at last, finding that she made a capital servant and secretary, and required no wages, he began to congratulate himself on his good sense in taking her away from her convent. At the same time he had the satisfaction (for I fear it is a satisfaction to a low and sinful mind) of venting all his ill-humour on one who was too humble and too meek to complain; and who bore every thing almost with cheerfulness, because she always remembered that he was her father. 'He has much to engage his thoughts,' she said to herself, 'and much, I fear, to trouble him, which, of course, he would not mention to me; for though he looks so grand and so handsome, and is dressed out in such courtly splendour, I, who am now used to his looks, can often see a sad weight of melancholy upon his brow, and many a mark of care about his dear face; and if I, and all of us in the little convent, used to bear with sister Victorine's cross looks and speeches, because, though she had nothing to provoke her in that peaceful cloister, she was naturally of an unhappy temper; shall I murmur when my own father, who has so much, I dare say, to put him out, is pleased to rate and scold me? And, after all, he does not mean to be unkind to his poor child. I'm very sure of that.'

"My dear children," said aunt Amabel, breaking off from her narration, "you see that this poor humble maiden had discovered something of the secret of how to be happy. Even though the brute went so far as to beat her, as the Lady Elizabeth was convinced he did, she never uttered a word of complaint against him, never gave way to moodiness, or sullen silence, or sought to gain the pity and sympathy of others: but read her little manual, and never forgot to keep herself in a state of constant watchfulness and prayer.

"The Lady Elizabeth, who had discovered the good qualities of Monica, would fain have had her remain at Old Court; but on hearing, as she soon did, that her father had arrived safely in France, she could not be detained, but set off to join him there, which she did with little difficulty, there being no longer any talk of war with France, after all was settled by the treaty of Nimeguen. I know not how my grandmother learnt the sequel to this little history, though I think I have some recollection of her telling me that she received several letters many years after from Monica. Indeed, if I am not mistaken, some of the circumstances found their way into the public prints. Monica followed her father to Brussels, where she found him lodging at a small inn, and still managing to make the same display in public, having re-

ceived a sum of money from the French government; of which circumstance however, she at that time knew nothing. She met with a most unwelcome reception; for De Clifford had secretly hoped that something would happen to detain her in England. He determined, however, to get rid of her, and though he did not actually turn her out of the house, he took a more effectual way with one who was so humble, and possessed so little selfishness. With a gentleness of manner, such as he had never displayed towards her before, he pretended to confide in her, and to throw himself upon her affection while he desired her to leave him. 'His fortunes,' he said, 'were sadly changed; he must seek some foreign service; perhaps in Spain, perhaps in the colonies.' Monica entreated permission to accompany him. 'No, it was impossible! he could not bear to tell her so, but she would be a burden on him.' She would have said something more: she had sunk at his feet, and raised her clasped hands to implore him; he did not seem to notice her emotion, but silenced her by declaring that what he advised was not only best in his opinion, but it was his wish—his mind was made up on the subject. 'She might go,' he said, 'to her favourite convent at Amiens, or to any other. A French diligence would start from Brussels the next morning. He had secured her

a place in it. He was obliged to leave her that evening—he was under pressing engagements.' Having said this, he put a little purse containing a few louis-d'ors into her hand, kissed her cheek, bade her 'farewell,' and left the room.—Perhaps he heard—perhaps he did not, the deep, deep sob which burst from her bosom as he departed. Perhaps they told him the next morning—perhaps they did not (for he was utterly careless to ask much about her) that she was found in a strong hysteric fit just where he had left her. She was, however, soon calm and resigned, and departed the next morning, sweetly thanking the servants of the humble inn for their attentions (which had, alas! been little enough) to her.

"A few hours after the departure of his poor forsaken child, the heartless De Clifford, under the assumed title of the Comte de Bellerive, was married to a rich widow, not many years older than his own daughter.

"'To my own favourite convent at Amiens, or to any other,' said Monica to herself, as she entered France. 'My dear father did not positively command me to go back to Amiens, and therefore,' she continued, looking thoughtfully at the few pieces of gold through the net-work of her little purse, 'therefore, as I am so very poor, and as it would be very wrong to be a burden upon the good

abbess and the nuns, who have barely sufficient to live upon, therefore I will go at once to Paris; I shall find some pious and charitable souls there, who will kindly receive me into their society, and I do not mind if I go as a servant; there can be no disgrace in innocent, honest poverty. She was received among a sisterhood, humble, patient, self-denying, actively industrious as herself; inspired with the same modest piety, the same sweet and overflowing charity to all their fellow creatures. An instinctive feeling seemed to lead her to them in preference to any convent where the nuns led, if not a useless, yet an idle kind of life. Among the sisterhood of the *Sœurs de la Charité*, Monica was soon understood, and estimated at her real value; and in a life devoted to the happiness of others, in nursing the sick, and relieving the wants of the indigent, and visiting the afflicted and all who had none to comfort them, she soon became one of the happiest and most cheerful of human creatures. One only trouble weighed upon her heart; she could not forget her father, though he had, in fact, so cruelly forgotten and deserted her; but as she never ceased to pray for him, and as she was daily more convinced, from experience, that One whom she loved, even better than her earthly father, felt a kind and tender pity, even for the most wretched and the most unworthy of his creatures, she lived in the daily hope of seeing him again. 'But even

if I do not see him here on earth,' she said to herself, 'I will never give up the hope of meeting him in a far better world.' Years and years, ay, more than twenty, passed away, and still Monica never heard even the mention of her father's name. At last they met—this father and daughter. Monica was requested to accompany one of the sisterhood (who had worn out her strength by her active piety, and was ordered, as a last hope, to return to her native air) to a little village near Marseilles. The sick nun recovered, and they prepared to return to Paris; yet before they went, Monica and her companion determined to pay a few visits of charity to the wretched paupers of the neighbourhood, and distribute among them all the money they were enabled to spare from the expenses of their journey. In one of their walks, these two kind and humble creatures visited that quarter where the galley-slaves were at work. As they approached, a sort of litter passed them carried by two men, on which was laid the thin and wasted figure of an aged man, whose long white hair fell streaming over the side of the litter, and who apparently betrayed no signs of life, except by the deep hollow groans which from time to time he uttered.

" 'Here,' said Monica to her companion, 'here is a proper object for our attention; let us, my good sister, turn back, and go along with these

people; we are used to these scenes, and may afford some little relief to that poor groaning creature.'

"Arm in arm, the holy sisters turned their steps and went along with the little mournful procession, and as they went, the blessings of the people accompanied them; for the very dress of the *Sœurs de la Charité* was then lovely in the eyes of the French people; and well it might be, for there was scarcely a poor family in Paris to which those kind and pious creatures had not rendered some sweet and tender mercy*.

"'And who,' said Monica (for her sister was still in too delicate a state to speak much at a time), 'who is the poor man they are carrying so carefully?'

"'He is a galley-slave, good mother,' was the reply she received; 'an old galley-slave, who has been, they say, a sad wicked one in his time, and has been branded in several places, for he escaped once. Poor creature! there never was a greater change than in that man. Thanks to the goodness of an English monk in the Franciscan monastery

* Even in the frantic reign of the French revolution, when the very name of religion was proscribed, those who were, in fact, the living personifications of christian charity, the *Sœurs de la Charité*, were respected and revered, even by the most infamous, wherever they appeared.

hard by! He found out that the poor wretch was from his own country; and so down he came every day, and would sit in the hot sun, close by the poor creature, while he was at his work. Many a time have I seen him: and reason he would, and make things very plain, and entreat so kindly and sweetly, that at last, after many weeks (for the poor slave would pay no attention at first, but would rave, and swear, and fly into the most violent passions, and bid the good monk begone); at last the poor unhappy creature listened to him, and became, day after day, more broken-hearted, and humble, and very grateful for the patience and love of the holy man: and now, that he is, to all appearance, dying (for he has just sunk down, quite worn out by his age, and by his heavy labours) I think he will die happy, and with the blessing of our gracious Lord upon his grey head.'

" 'Lean on me, my poor friend,' said Monica, as she kneeled down beside the hard pallet on which the old man had been laid; 'lean on my shoulder, for I can see that your poor weak arm can scarcely support your head, as you raise yourself to speak to us. Lean on me, and compose yourself, for I have sent a good woman to ask your friend, Father Pierre, to come to you. It will comfort you, will it not? to have him with you at your last hour.'

" The old man replied very mildly, and then lay

without moving or speaking, till the monk arrived. Afterwards every one left the cell but the two holy sisters, and the monk administered the last offices of his religion to the dying man, who all the while rested his head upon the bosom of sister Monica. At last, when all was finished, and the monk had inquired if he had any commission to intrust him with, the aged man said, in a faint, deep voice, 'Only that one last favour!—should you ever hear of my daughter—my only child, of whom I have so often spoken to you, tell her, that he who forsook her—he who broke so many of the laws both of God and man, died at last, as a brand snatched from the burning, a self-convicted, humbled, repentant sinner, with no hope but in Him, who came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance, who has assured the sinner, with such tender love, that though his sins be as scarlet, they shall be made white as snow. Tell her nothing more,' he added; 'nothing of my life since I forsook her.—'twould break the heart of my poor Monica. Alas! alas! I may be sending a message to one long since in the grave!—my unkindness may have killed my humble child! You tell me, good father! that the nuns at Amiens, to whom you wrote, have never heard of her. But it is only just that I, who have been such an unnatural father in my lifetime, should be denied this comfort at my death!'

"My good friend," said the gentle nun, who supported his head, in a voice faltering so that she could scarcely express herself, but sweet and soothing, as woman's only can be, 'I am glad that the providence of God has brought me hither. I know your daughter. I—I——'Tis a comfort she will bless God for while she lives,' cried Monica, losing at once all her self-possession, quite unable to speak any longer with so calm a voice, and giving way to a burst of weeping:—"Tis my comfort, my joy!" she said, tenderly bending over him, 'thus to support your dying head, my father, on the bosom of your Monica—your own child, who is come to love and to bless you!'

"I don't know how it is," said aunt Amabel, putting her handkerchief to her eyes, "but whenever I come to this part of the story, I cannot get on; and it was just the same with my grandmother, who had known poor Monica; she never could refrain from weeping when she related the account of her father's death, with his head upon her bosom. And as for the rest of the story, about De Clifford's funeral, and Monica's return to Paris, and her living there till she was nearly a hundred years old, with all her faculties about her, I cannot tell you any more—not a word more, Gracey, just at present; so don't ask me."

EVENING THE SIXTH. ---

"Away, and mock the time with fairest show:
False face must hide what the false heart doth know."

Macbeth.

THIS story is told by Marmaduke Fairfax.

SUCCESSFUL AMBITION.

"AND now all had been well," said Aymer Baldwyn, "since Heaven hath called away my brother John; all had been well, but for this luckless marriage."

"Still speaking on this marriage! I hoped thou hadst forgotten it," said his wife, "or been wearied with lamenting it to thyself." Aymer started as his wife spake thus: she had sat so quietly, bending over her book, that he had become unconscious of her presence. "Alas! there is but one left to remind us of it now," she continued; "but one poor, sickly child! and this," (pointing as she spoke to a long black coffin, which stood on its trestles at the further end of the room). "How well your brother loved that wayward boy! Poor Valentine will miss his father's love."

"He will, indeed," said Aymer; and stopping before the coffin, he laid one hand upon it, while

with the other he brushed away the tears which had gathered in his eyes. "You mistake me, love," he said to his wife, in a soft and mournful voice; "I meant to say this: Had he, whose corpse lies within this coffin, never seen that bold and evil-spirited woman—had he not in his age degraded himself by marrying her, we might not have seen him hang his head at her misconduct. I verily believe her wickedness and her base desertion of him broke his heart; for he doted on her, trusted her implicitly, and was the last to believe in his own dishonour and her guilt."

On that day the body of John Baldwyn was buried, and on the return of his relations from the funeral, the will was read in form. John Baldwyn had left the whole of his fortune to his son Valentine, with the exception of five hundred pounds to his niece Lavinia, the daughter of Aymer and Constance Baldwyn. There was a clause in his will to this intent, that he forbade his son, at the peril of wilful disobedience to a father's last commands, to move from the plain but gentle sphere of life in which he left him; and, inasmuch as the family of Baldwyn was of noble origin, and it was well known to many that they might put in a just claim to the lapsed peerage of their house, he charged his son, as he dreaded his father's curse on such proceedings, not to seek his restoration to the

title of Ravensbourne. Now John Baldwyn had, he thought, good reasons for this peremptory command. He had been a stanch loyalist, and in his younger days had suffered deeply, in many ways, from his adherence to the royal family; so that at his father's death he dropped the title he was born to, and, collecting the remnant of his fortune, he retired to the city of Norwich, where, entering into trade as a goldsmith, he lived unmoted and unharmed. The property he had amassed in a short time (for every thing went well with him) was very great; and having acquired a penurious habit of thinking and acting, it had seemed probable that the whole of it would descend to his heir. This heir had been his brother Aymer.

Aymer Baldwyn had married, when almost a boy, a lovely but portionless maiden, the daughter of a noble house; and had offended his brother by his marriage. Having been always of an extravagant turn, his small fortune was soon expended, and he was at last so reduced that he was obliged to apply to his brother for relief. He became the foreman, and afterwards the successor, of his brother John, who upon his marriage retired from business. When Charles the Second returned to England, and ascended for the first time his father's throne, amid the eager and tumultuous rejoicings of his people, John Baldwyn went up to London to offer

his duty and congratulations to his sovereign, and probably to claim the title of his ancestors for his son. But he was soon sickened and disgusted with the despicable frivolity and the infamous profligacy of the court. His wife was too beautiful not to attract the loose desires of some of the wittings there, and too vain and unprincipled to resist their solicitations. Her husband soon discovered his dishonour; for she openly left him and her child for her paramour. He returned an altered and broken-hearted man to Norwich, resolved never to see either the court or his wife again.

There was so great a difference in many points between John Baldwyn and his brother Aymer, that had they not been brothers, they might never have been friends. Aymer was proud, ambitious, and crafty; but more ambitious than proud, and more crafty than ambitious. He had, therefore, managed, with considerable skill, to appear to his brother humble and contented with a station which from his soul he despised; for he had always nourished a hope that he should be able, at some future time, to assume that importance in the eyes of the world, which a goldsmith's foreman could not command. The birth of Valentine came like a cutting blight upon his hopes and his schemes; but they were too deeply rooted in a vain and sinful heart to be destroyed. He was left exasperated

to his brother's will, and sole guardian to his nephew; and, but for the clause abovementioned in the will, he might, by putting in the claims of his nephew to the family title, have gratified his own ambition in some degree. But no, that path was forbidden: what was he then to do? He knew not, he asked not—but the subject was the daily food of his thoughts, and his longings. Ere he knew his danger, the tempter had held many a secret communing with his heart. We know what *he* offers are—"All these will I give thee." We know, alas, what the enemy of man never forgets,—his conditions; "If thou wilt fall down and worship me—"

Aymer had naturally a kind disposition; he was never harsh to Valentine, though the boy was insolent, fretful, and certainly ungrateful to him. He watched over the health of his nephew; nay, imagined that he felt anxious about his recovery. He was ready to grant him many an indulgence which his more judicious wife disapproved. In fact he had no bad intentions against the boy, but he was not fortified by one right or decided principle towards him. He knew not what circumstances might make him. How unconsciously, yet how willingly he might yield to them.

His own daughter seemed born to grace a high station. She manifested, at an early age, a disposition frank, noble, and courteous in no common

degree. She was one of nature's own sweet gentlewomen. Her household movements, if I may so speak, had a simple and sylph-like grace about them; her very beauty (and she was wondrously beautiful), a refined and distinguished character. Alas, even this lovely and gifted creature was a snare to her weak, ambitious father. He could not bear to think that she, who seemed so peculiarly suited to add new grace and lustre to his noble race, should become the unknown wife of some Norwich tradesman. But Aymer was turned from his dangerous and idle dreams by the suddenly increasing debility of his young nephew. After consulting many medical men, it was at last determined that Valentine should accompany his aunt and uncle to Bristol to drink the waters; and to be placed there under the care of a celebrated physician. As the absence of Mr. Baldwyn and his wife from home was to be as short as possible, Lavinia was left at Norwich under the care of an old and trusty servant.

For the first few days of their journey the travellers met with no impediment. Valentine was in high spirits, and delighted with every thing he saw. One evening twilight drew on unheeded as they entered a thick wood near Maidenhead; the trees on either side of the road interlaced their branches overhead, and added to the dusky gloom. Mrs. Baldwyn became uneasy, and expressed some

fears that the lateness of the hour might be injurious to the health of Valentine, and her husband turned round to speak with their servant who had accompanied them on horseback. He desired the man to ride forward and prepare for their reception at the inn, where they were to halt for the night. The servant was scarcely out of sight when three men rushed from a thicket by the road-side, and surrounded the carriage. The driver made but little resistance, and in a moment the doors were forced open, and their property was demanded in a peremptory voice. It was refused by Mr. Baldwyn. A scuffle instantly ensued, during which several fire-arms were discharged, and Mr. Baldwyn and Valentine, still struggling with the robbers, sprung from the carriage. Mrs. Baldwyn was dragged out, and received a violent blow on the head from her fall. She knew not how long she lay senseless on the ground, when she opened her eyes: as she lay she saw that two persons only were present. Her blood froze with horror at the scene she witnessed: one figure was bending over the other, and she heard the faint tones of Valentine's voice; he seemed exhausted, but spoke tenderly. "Is it you, uncle? and you are safe? How kind to think of me!" In a moment the tone was changed to a shriek of terror: "Ah! what have you done? cruel! cruel!—I am dying—dying—"

The words were followed by repeated moans. She caught the gleam of a naked weapon in her husband's grasp; he plunged it again into the body of his nephew; she saw nothing, knew nothing more.

Mrs. Baldwyn was roused to consciousness by finding herself lifted from the ground by her husband and several strangers: they were about to place her in the carriage—"Where am I? what has happened?" were her first words. "Where is Valentine?" she cried with a louder voice, as the recollection of what she had witnessed rushed into her mind. She looked for an answer to those around her: a frown was on her husband's brow; but at her repeated question, he replied in a smooth voice, "Our poor nephew is no more! he has lost his life in this horrid attack."

A coroner's inquest was held upon the body of Valentine, and the verdict returned was, a charge of wilful murder against some person or persons unknown; not even the slightest suspicion fell upon the real murderer. Indeed Aymer himself had been wounded; it was said by some, severely. The robbers were pursued in all directions, but all search for them proved vain. The mangled corpse was buried at Maidenhead, and a few days after the funeral Mr. Baldwyn and his wife proceeded slowly on their return home. Mrs. Baldwyn took advantage of the severe blow she had received on

her head, and begged that she might be excused speaking. Indeed, for some days Aymer appeared little disposed to speak on any subject; but as they drew nearer Norwich, to the astonishment and horror of his wife, he began to speak with ill-concealed satisfaction of his plans for the future; and when they reached home she perceived a look, too like a smile of triumph, pass over her husband's face, when he first beheld their own beautiful and healthy child.

It was some time before Constance was decided how to act in her difficult and wretched situation; but at last she thought she saw before her the path in which her duty lay; then humbly, but willingly she set forth to tread that holy path. Yet what were the feelings of the wife, the woman, I should say, the pure, tender, timid woman: one of a peculiarly pure and delicate frame of mind; one who was wont to tremble at the bare mention of a tale of blood, to be obliged to live the constant companion of a murderer—of one whose hand she had herself seen raised above his helpless and expiring victim.—At all seasons, in all places, to be the nearest of all human beings to him—to lie beside him in a silent chamber all through the dark and dismal night—to hear, in her sleepless agony, his groans and muttered, unconnected words (words which she understood but too well)—to witness his sudden starts,

and to be grasped convulsively during his broken dreams by the very hands which, for a long, long time, she shuddered even to look upon. All this, and more than this (for who that had not felt such pangs could describe them), was she forced to sustain: and though some natural feelings revolted at the trial, all this no power on earth could have persuaded her to shun. It has been truly said, that one great crime in a person whom we love has less power to estrange the heart than a continued succession of little slights and unkindnesses; and unconscious as she was of this theory, the devoted wife yet felt its truth. Her guilty and wretched husband had been ever kind, gentle, and attentive to her; and, in all her abhorrence for his crimes, her deep, fond, woman's love knew no change; nay, when years had past away, and he had gradually recovered much of his lost composure, and when time had taken away the greenness of her own heart's wound, she often wept with pious sorrow to observe the torpid slumbering of the conscience, which had so tortured him at first, and she half wished even that her own nights of horror might return, so that he might be awakened to a conviction of his real state, to repentance, to prayer, to forgiveness.

Not many months after the death of his nephew; Aymer de Belwyn (for he took his real name again)

gave up the business of a goldsmith, and leaving Norwich proceeded with his wife and daughter to London. He had soon many interviews with those in favour at court, and even with the king himself. The fruit of those secret interviews was soon made public, when the Earl and Countess of Ravensbourne, with their daughter the lovely Lady Lavinia de Balwyn, appeared at Whitehall.

And now that Aymer had attained what he most ardently longed for, was he happy? A theorist might answer "No; he could not be happy;" but theorists are apt to make mistakes. Was he happy? He certainly was not unhappy; and if the world are right in giving the name of happiness to their usual enjoyments, Aymer was happy. With a levity perfectly natural to the human character, he could now snatch away his thoughts from all the troublesome whispers of memory and conscience, and occupy his whole heart with worldly affairs, and their grave or trifling vanities. His fine face and well-shaped figure were set off by all the accompaniments of his conscious superiority in rank—by a natural dignity of demeanour and graciousness of manner, which had not been so well suited to the foreman of a Norwich goldsmith—by a noble but splendid simplicity of dress. In short, nothing seemed wanting to render him popular with all who knew him. His hospitality

drew crowds to his mansion, where entertainments of princely magnificence made that hospitality doubly charming. Then he possessed that delicate species of humour which, if not as excellent, is often ten times more agreeable than wit. Above all, every look, and word, and action was reined in, and guided, and managed with that fine and exquisite tact which so few possess either by nature or by practice.

"But there is the first and fairest attraction I possess," said Lord Ravensbourne to himself, as he threw a glad and rapid glance down the long and brilliantly lighted apartments, at the farther end of which he was standing. "There is the loadstar which draws hither even the homage of royalty." His fond admiring gaze rested upon her who approached, upon his young and lovely daughter. How well her costly attire became her. In what rich folds the soft and snow-white satin fell around her slender form. With what a pure and gleaming lustre shone the orient pearls upon her arms and bosom. How lightly, and yet in what a careless and clustering profusion, the dark tendrils of her hair clung, as it were, lovingly, round the white brow and damask cheeks of the smiling and artless girl.

"Father," she said, "dear father, are you there?"

and she sprung forward so fleetly that a little coronal of musk roses which had been placed on one side of her head fell to the ground. Her delighted father was fastening the flowers in her silken hair when Charles and the court were announced.

At the present day, when we look back upon the abandoned court of Charles the Second, we look with an undazzled gaze. The pageant has passed away—its royalty and rank, with all the glory of their earthly splendour—its galaxy of exquisite beauty—all are in their grave! And we turn away from the pages of Grammont, disgusted with ourselves, that even a style so inimitable should have detained the eye amid such a display of heart-sickening and contemptible profligacy. We forget with what a different effect the enchantment must have worked upon those who lived when all that profligacy wore its most alluring aspect; when the monarch himself held out the golden sceptre of his favour to lewd and unblushing prostitutes; when lords and high-born dames proved false to all the virtues of their chivalry; and the worst examples of impiety, and adultery, and lasciviousness were to be found among the highest in station round the glorious, I may almost say, the sacred, throne of Britain.

But the countess!—the pure, high-minded Constance!—did she countenance, did she receive the

wanton beauties of the court? How could she do otherwise, situated as she was? (at least so she said to herself.) Her own queen could not forbid them her presence: her husband would hear no remonstrance on the subject. She had almost determined to brave his anger, when she thought that her daughter would then appear without the protection of her own mother drew her forth, with her aching heart, and her pale face, and her faint unreal smiles, into the midst of the thoughtless and licentious throng. She saw with horror her young and pure-minded daughter exposed to the insidious flatteries of royal and noble debauchees, and the conversation of bold, bad women: and she felt, with truth, that such an atmosphere of folly and sin might work with a slow but certain power, till its corruption had sunk into the heart of her resistless child, and corrupted all its issues.

Deeply and unceasingly she felt her wretchedness—her need of wisdom, of guidance, of support; and she did what every wife and every mother should do—she prayed deeply and unceasingly to the only friend whose ear was open to her faintest sighs, to whom alone she could tell out all her sorrows, and, above all, confide the grief which had well nigh broken her heart. And what was the purport of her prayer?—That of a true and heroic spirit. Timid and feeble as she was in herself,

that, however heavy her own sufferings might be in this present world, she might see her daughter preserved from sin, her husband brought to repentance. Steadily and resolutely she put away from herself every temptation to indulge in the fair, calm season of prosperity, and the apparent security of happiness. She looked forward unshrinkingly to the future, and strove to be prepared for the misery, which she knew must come at last, however unheeded or undreaded then. When she looked upon the smiling faces of her thoughtless child, and of her guilty husband, the thought came over her, with insupportable agony, that she might never see their faces in eternal rest. She marked how gaily and how confidently they ventured almost to the vortex of licentious dissipation, and she only prayed the longer, the more fervently, for them, fearing lest they had forgotten or neglected to watch and to pray for themselves.

Among the few unforsaken habits of those days when Lavinia was the happy daughter of a Norwich tradesman, she had occasionally continued to go forth at an early hour on some errand of charity, among the houses of the poor and afflicted. One morning, having fatigued herself with paying an unusual number of visits to her poor neighbours, she was hurrying past a door which she had frequently entered. The mistress of the hovel, an aged widow, saw her pass,

and entreated her to return and speak some words of comfort to a distracted creature, who had been brought thither in a dying state. Some dreadful accident she had met with in returning from the playhouse the night before; and she could not discover that the wretched creature had any home. As Lavinia entered the house, the doctor (who had been called in) came forth from the little back room where the woman was lying, keeping up a low and piteous moaning. The man spoke in a pompous, unfeeling manner of his miserable patient; and Lavinia suspected, from what he said to her, that he had terrified the dying woman by harshly and suddenly acquainting her that he entertained no hope of her recovery. She was soon convinced of the truth of her suspicions, for scarcely had the door closed on him, when the woman called aloud, and with a voice almost frantic, for some one to come and sit by her dying bed and comfort her. "I will come," said the kind-hearted girl, with a voice of soothing tenderness; and in a moment she was sitting by the bed-side, and the wretched woman had seized her hand in her burning grasp, while she burst out into louder and more passionate exclamations of despair.

"What soft hand is this?" she said at last, "and who are you? I cannot see your face, for my eyes were too weak to bear the light, and they darkened

the casement for me;—but who are you? Your voice has a sweet sound to my ear, like one I have heard before. I cannot tell where at present; for my head is all confused.”

“Ask not who I am; care not to know,” replied the gentle girl; “but believe”—and more tenderly she pressed the burning hand that clasped her own—“believe that I am a friend! that I feel for your deplorable condition, and will gladly bring you every comfort in my power!”

“Nay, but I *will* know who you are,” cried the woman, with a wild shriek, suddenly and roughly disengaging her hand; “don’t torment me thus: I want none of your relief—I will have no comfort from you, till I see your face. Ho! mistress!” she called loudly to the old widow, “throw back your curtains here, or I will rise and do so myself. I must look upon the face of this young creature.”

“No, no, you need not undraw the curtains,” said Lavinia, very mildly; “there needed not all this violence. I am not so very anxious to conceal my name; I am Lavinia de Balwyn, daughter to the Earl of Ravensbourne. Do you know me?”

“Know you!” cried the woman, in a deep sullen voice; “know you! ay, that I do! and but too well! and I never wish to see your face again! I hate you! Leave me to die as I am!—only do, do leave me!”

Lavinia, seeing into what a state the poor wretch had worked herself, rose up instantly, and quitted the room. "I can do nothing for this poor woman, whose conduct is indeed full of mystery to me," she remarked to the old widow: "I cannot account for her dislike and hatred to me; but she is in an awful state; and since I cannot pray with her, I may pray for her. Do you go to her; she may soon become more reasonable. I will remain here, and in a little while you can come and tell me what I shall send you for her."

The poor widow declined going to the sick woman: but, leaving Lavinia in the outer room, she said that she would take advantage of her stay, to go and ask a neighbour to come and keep her company in her attendance on her hapless guest. When Lavinia was left alone, trembling, she could not resist praying for the soul of the woman, who had so rudely and wantonly reviled her; but soon she was surprised to hear the sound of weeping, and a voice of humble, but passionate earnestness, entreating her forgiveness. She found the wretched woman an altered creature. Exhausted, she fell back upon her pillow, as Lavinia entered, but she strove to raise herself again, and besought her to stay and hear her; for she had much to say to her. "I lay," she said, "peeping through the half open door at you—I saw you kneeling, and a look

upon your face, so like my own, lost, murdered child, that all my wicked hatred passed away. It was just so, just with your sweet innocent look, that he used to kneel beside me, when I was a happy mother. Oh! is it possible that I have ever been, what I then was; and can be, what I now am! Do not go," she said, after a long pause; "I am the mother of your cousin, Valentine Balwyn, that poor child whom they found murdered in the wood near Maidenhead; but why do I speak of myself?—it is of you that I would speak: I may befriend you, wretch as I am! The Lord *** has paid particular attentions to you! Nay, do answer me! pray, answer me! I may seem impatient, but I am in earnest with you! God knows, I have now your happiness at heart!"

"I *have* received attentions from Lord ***."

"You do not love him—you will never marry him; and this you have told him?"

"I have," replied Lavinia.

"And yet you have laughed with him, and allowed him a licence which might have misled a better man!"

Lavinia felt the hot blood mount to her temples, —she hesitated; but, at length, in a low and faltering voice, replied, "What you say is all true—perfectly true!"

"And this evening the king gives a splendid entertainment in honour of yourself."

"He does!"

"Well, then, this evening has been fixed upon to decide your fate. A plan is laid to carry you off as you are returning from Whitehall. You know the story of Lord Rochester and his poor, injured bride; such may be your story, for Lord **** will stop at nothing till he has forced you to become his wife, and has thus secured the wealth of a rich and titled heiress. Would you know how I heard this? I will confess I heard it from a low fellow, a lacquey, one of those to be employed in the plot this evening. The man is in the confidence of his lord; and last night, at the playhouse, he told me all was decided on. I have long known him, and have been for weeks no stranger to the intentions of his master; but I hated you and yours, for your father always opposed my marriage with his brother, and I rejoiced in any scheme which might lead to the ruin of his best and dearest hopes." Lavinia was deeply shocked; she sat down beside the bed, and, turning away her face, wept bitterly. "Ah, my poor, young lady!" said the sick woman, gently drawing away the curtain which concealed Lavinia from her view; "hear me say a few more words. I am a

vile, hardened creature now, but still a woman, and was once as young and innocent as you are now. Are you not doing just as I did? are you not trifling, and playing with danger? are you not gay, and thoughtless, and self-confident?—Women as noble and beautiful as yourself have met with even a more fearful fall than mine—have been, if it were possible, even more miserable! more utterly lost!" Here, with a deep, heart-broken sigh, the poor woman seemed to fall into a sad depth of thoughtfulness, and after staring almost vacantly upon Lavinia for some seconds, she seemed even to forget of what she was speaking, and sunk quietly back upon her pillow.

I never heard how the Lady Lavinia escaped from the plot which had been laid to carry her off, when returning from the palace; but I believe that circumstances were brought to light which plainly proved the usefulness of the warning she had received. I well know, that from the day when she conversed with the dying mother of her cousin Valentine, she was ever distinguished by a discreteness, which might almost have been termed singular in the licentious court of Charles, and among the many females there of dazzling beauty, but (with a few sweet and rare exceptions) of vain and wanton carriage.

Constance had heard from her daughter of the

state of extreme danger in which her sister-in-law was lying, and she lost no time in visiting her in her affliction. Her mild and judicious attentions won upon the dying woman, and she could scarcely bear to lose sight of her, till she closed her eyes in their last sleep.

During her attendance on the wretched woman, she had gained from her the knowledge of a circumstance, the effect of which she could not resist trying on her husband. She had some hope that he might be led by it to see by what a miserable delusion he had been led on to crime, and how useless to his own ends had been the scheme which had not stopped even at murder in its accomplishment. "I have been attending on the deathbed of our poor nephew's mother," said Constance. Her lord started, and looked up astonished; for she had not spoken of the wretched woman before. She then mentioned the manner in which Lavinia had first seen her, and entered upon a detailed account of the several interviews in which they had met. At last she said very quietly, "The poor woman confessed to me that she had deceived us all in her marriage with your elder brother. Her son, had he lived, possessed no legal right to the title and estates of his father. She was the wife of another person at the very time she married your brother, and her first and real husband is now alive."

"Ha!—What do you tell me?" cried Aymer; as, trembling with eagerness, he seized her hand, and looked steadfastly in her face, as if to read there again what she had declared to him. "What! and Valentine *might* have lived, and all had still been mine! and I knew it not! Fool! wretched fool that I was!"—He stopped all at once: it struck him that he had said too much. With a forced, unmeaning smile, and with a softer voice, he repeated, "Fool that I was, to be so duped in that false marriage!—I meant—I said"—

Constance rose up, saying, she must leave him; she had promised her daughter to walk with her. In fact, she was shocked to see her husband's guilty confusion. She had said enough—she left the words to work.

For days, for weeks Aymer appeared an altered person. He heard not when spoken to; and when he replied, his answers were often unconnected with the question put to him. In the midst of some lively discourse he would fall into a fit of musing till his sighs checked the laughter of those around him. But gradually his mind recovered its usual tone. He reasoned with himself on his security from discovery. He felt and hugged that security, forgot his fears; and returned with his whole heart to his dreams of vain glory. Again he looked round with a glad and satisfied gaze upon his fair

possessions, upon his beautiful and accomplished Lavinia, and he believed himself happy.

It was about this time that the Lady Lavinia received proposals of marriage from a young nobleman, one of the most distinguished, as well by rank as by his own personal qualities, in the whole kingdom. No impediment presented itself to the marriage. Lavinia and her parents were daily more delighted with the conduct and manners of the Duke of R——. Even Constance forgot awhile her deep sorrows in the happiness of her innocent and beloved child.

Lord Ravensbourne had seldom visited the fine old seat of his family in Devonshire, but he now gave orders to have the most sumptuous preparations made there for the Lady Lavinia's marriage, and he then set off for his castle with his wife and daughter, and a numerous retinue. They were soon followed by the young Duke of R——, and by many of their gay and noble friends, who had promised to be present at the wedding.

The nuptial-day was fixed, and till then a succession of splendid entertainments were daily given to their guests and the surrounding neighbourhood.

"My mother looks very grave this evening," said Lavinia to her father. "I fear that something has occurred to distress her. Do inquire, my dearest father."

"Constance, we are very anxious about you here," said Lord Ravensbourne, speaking across the table to his wife. "Lavinia thinks you look unusually grave on this, the eve of her marriage."

"And surely it would not be unusual for a mother to look grave," replied the lady, "who is about to part with her beloved child; but I will forget my own sorrows. I was not thinking of them. I was anxiously observing the strange and hectic colour on Lavinia's cheek. Surely, my love, you must perceive it. I fear our late festivities have been too much for her strength, and that to-day especially she has over-exerted herself."

"Oh, my own mother! I am quite well, I do assure you, I am," replied the Lady Lavinia, and she smiled sweetly and tenderly on her mother; "and as for my cheeks, I, too, may say, it would not be so very unusual for a maiden to blush deeply on the day before her marriage."

"Indeed," said her father, interrupting her, "it was but a few minutes since that I was speaking of this beautiful colour (and he fondly patted with his fingers his daughter's glowing cheek) to the duke, and we both agreed that we had never seen Lavinia look so well as she does to-night."

That night, however, when all were retired to rest, a slight form, all clad in white, glided into the chamber of Lord and Lady Ravensbourne, and

stood at the foot of their bed, while a voice, which they recognized to be that of their daughter, implored them, with faint and mournful tones, to rise and come to her assistance. The affrighted mother was the first to spring up, and she soon discovered how dreadfully her fears were realized. The Lady Lavinia had scarcely laid her head upon her pillow, and sunk into a gentle doze, when she was awakened by the blood rising up in her throat till it half choked her, and then gushing like a flood from her mouth and nostrils. With some difficulty she had reached her parent's chamber, which opened to her own dressing-room, and ere she could reply to her mother's anxious questions, she had fainted from weakness in her arms.

"And this is the end of all my hopes! Would that I had never seen the light, since this day of vengeance has come upon me at last!"

Who would have recognized the pale, haggard man, thus speaking to himself, as he paced a gorgeous but empty saloon, his dress neglected and disordered, his hand twisted in his tangled hair, who would have recognized the courtly, smiling Earl of Ravensbourne?

"I know it," he said almost fiercely, as the door of the apartment was thrown open, and his wife

appeared. "You are come—I know what you are come to tell me! you need not speak it—she is dead!"

"She is not dead," replied the lady, with a voice and manner expressive of a heavenly calmness. "Be comforted, my poor husband, my own best beloved Aymer! She cannot recover—we cannot expect her recovery—you know we cannot; but she is not dead; she would have you come to her—she sends me for you now." And who would have thought that she who bore herself with such a gentle but dignified composure, with a countenance, notwithstanding its extreme paleness, so full of hope and sweet unearthly peace—who would have thought that she had been lately the timid, trembling, mournful Lady Ravensbourne? one whose very smiles had often made others melancholy.

The manner of the earl changed at once as he entered the apartment of his daughter. He seemed quite overcome by a more than woman's tenderness. He sunk down on his knees before her, and took both her pale hands in his, and looked up in her face so piteously, and addressed her with such moving words, that his wife could not restrain her tears, as she entreated him to rise. "My dear husband!" she exclaimed, "would you hasten our sweet child's departure? You know how soon the fearful bleeding will return, should her feelings be

thus tried. Ah!" she thought within herself, as, dis-regarding her entreaties, he selfishly called upon his child—his only, and his darling child—not to die—not to leave her wretched, broken-hearted father! "Ah, my poor, guilty husband! had you felt pity, when a young and helpless child, one who looked up to you as his father, lay dying beneath your cruel hand, you might not have brought these heavy judgments on our head."

But the Countess was still more affected, when Lavinia, fondly throwing her arms round her father's neck, whispered, in a voice scarcely audible, "There is one favour I have to ask you, would you grant it?"

"O my child! my sweet, my only child! tell me at once," he cried eagerly; "for I cannot say how readily, how gladly, I grant whatever you may ask!"

"'Tis but a simple request I would make, one easily performed, though of deepest importance to me. Bring to me the Book of God, and (as the last favour you can grant me) read and explain to me the words of life." Aymer hesitated; he would have excused himself, but Lavinia looked him gravely in the face, and, with a manner at once tender and solemn, exclaimed, "Nothing else can give me comfort, therefore I am sure you will not refuse me. Dear, dear father! it has only just oc-

curred to me, that for years, during our long dream of vanity and splendour, you have never (as you were wont to do in our humbler, happier days), you have never instructed me from the pure wisdom of these sacred pages. I wish, once before I die, to hear you read and speak to me just as you did then. 'Thank you, thank you,' she said, and smiled, as her father took the bible from a table near her.

"Where shall I read to you, my poor child?" he said mournfully.

"Where, where? Do you remember the part you last read to us, to Valentine, I mean, and myself, a few days before that fearful journey from which my poor cousin never returned? Are you in pain, father, for you look very ill?"

"No, my child," he replied, "I am quite well; I am only waiting for you to tell me where to read."

"That evening—it was one Sabbath evening," she said thoughtfully, "now I recollect, you read to us that striking parable, in which our Lord God compares himself to a householder, who planted a vineyard, and let it out to husbandmen, and sent his servants, after he had departed into a far country, that they might receive the fruits of it; but those wicked husbandmen ill-treated, and even killed his servants, as often as he sent them. You had so plain and simple a way of explaining the holy words,—I could so easily understand, from what

you told me, how those ill-treated servants resemble the prophets and holy men whom the Lord has sent in old times to warn and to convert a wicked world! But you dwelt chiefly upon the latter part of the affecting story, the love of God, in sending his own Son, in the hope that mankind would at least reverence him; and you remarked how wantonly, how impiously savage was their conduct towards the unoffending and holy Lamb of God, to whom no reverence was shown, but who was brutally and cruelly slain! 'We should feel horror-struck,' you said, 'were we to hear of such a story as that which our Lord relates, actually occurring in these times: if, when a householder sent his son to receive what was due to him from his estates, the tenants of that property were to say among themselves, This is the heir! come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance; and if they were to put into execution their cruel threat——.'

Lavinia stopped. For some moments her father's face had been turned away; but now his hand, which was clasped in hers, felt suddenly so cold and clammy, and his whole person shook so violently, that she became seriously alarmed: "Oh! my dearest father," she said, "how could you conceal it? I said you were ill! I knew you were! Dear mother, he is very ill!"

"I shall be better soon," he said, in a low hollow

tone; and, rising up, he waved his hand to his wife, as if to bid her not to follow him, and walked slowly from the room——

We look upon that part of the story of De Ranci as awfully dreadful, where he is described while in the midst of his career of unbridled wickedness, as seeking the chamber of his mistress—of her whom he had left in the freshness of youth and beauty, and finding, in a deserted and silent room, the pallid corpse of her he loved, laid out for burial in the garments of the grave; but surely a scene of more deep and dreary wretchedness opened slowly upon Aymer Balwyn. He had stopped not even at murder in the attainment of his object; and he had surmounted every difficulty. All his fears had fled away, and the full completion of his every hope was even in his grasp; so he had thought; but he found a shadow which faded, and faded away as he gazed upon it. His Lavinia, his beautiful, his titled daughter, stood at last on that pinnacle of earthly grandeur and distinction for which his proud ambition had designed her; and he had begun to laugh within himself—to applaud his reckless daring, to congratulate his wisdom on its glorious success. In the midst of his exultation he was called to watch beside her dying couch, to behold her health and beauty gradually withering away, and the grave yawning to

receive the victim which, day by day, was gliding from her father's arm. —

Soon after the magnificent funeral of the Lady Lavinia de Balwyn, her parents, the Earl and Countess of Ravensbourne, quitted their family seat, and returned to London. The earl gradually sunk into a dejected state of spirits, and seemed daily to lose his health and strength. He appeared to those who had known him before his daughter's death to have become suddenly an old and infirm man of altered character and habits.

It was about two years after his grievous loss, when he was beginning to recover some slight portion of his former health and spirits, that a message was brought him from a prisoner in Newgate (a noted felon, whose execution for murder was to take place in a few days), an earnest entreaty that he might have a private interview with the earl, having something to communicate to him before he died. At first the earl declared that he could not possibly comply with the man's request; but after some deliberation, and at the anxious request of his wife, he went. Painfully his conscience smote him as he entered the walls of the prison; and as he passed along he half expected the gates to roll back upon their harshly-grating hinges, and shut him in, a convicted murderer. He shuddered with horror as he looked round upon the prisoners, and heard

the clanking of their fetters, and felt that he deserved to be chained and turned in among them, rather than to be received with the bows and obsequious courtesy of the jailor and turnkeys who attended on him. At length the door of the condemned cell was thrown open, and in another moment he was alone, and locked in, with its wretched inmate. The day was dark and wintry, and the jailor had left a lamp upon the only table in the miserable cell. By the red light Aymer now perceived the prisoner. He came forward, heavily ironed, and respectfully begged him to sit down.

"It was kind of you to come and see me," said the man, "for now I shall not die quite so wretched as I might have done had you refused to visit me. I am speaking, I believe, to the Earl of Ravensbourne?"

"You are," replied Aymer.

"And once—some years ago—you were known as Mr. Baldwyn?"

"Yes."

"Do you remember a certain evening in September, about the year 16—? Do you remember a wood near Maidenhead, and a murder committed there?"

"I do," said Aymer, faintly.

"And the murderer!—"

"You speak very strangely!" exclaimed Aymer,

suddenly interrupting the man, for a dreadful suspicion darted across his mind, that the prisoner might have gained, in some almost impossible manner, a knowledge of his guilt. A guilty conscience is always exposed to the most unreasonable fears and suspicions!

"Hear me out," continued the man, "if you can listen with patience to such a villain. I well know how deeply I have wronged you; but hear my confession, and say that, for the Son of God's sake, you pardon me." Aymer began to breathe again. He perceived that he had nothing to fear from any thing the man might reveal. "The murderer was never taken; but I am the man; and the knife found in the body of your child was mine. I have been a father," said the man, in a stifled voice, "and I have often thought what your feelings must have been when you saw your only son butchered so cruelly before your eyes. But, indeed, when I and my comrades attacked you, we had no idea of murder. The resistance we met with in our attempt at robbery provoked me to strike; yet had I known the tender age of the poor young gentleman, I would not have injured him. As it was, till I heard of his death, I had no idea that death had followed my blow. I had a confused, and, as it proved, a false impression that I had wounded you in the arm."

All the time the man was speaking, Aymer sat in speechless terror, conscience-stricken, and fearing lest a word or a look should betray him. The man attributed his disturbed appearance to the excess of his grief, and, in a faltering tone, he added, "O my lord! can you pardon such a guilty wretch? Can a father forgive the murderer of his son?"—Aymer now clearly perceived the mistake the man had made, but he had not the heart to set him right.—"Answer me but in one word—one 'yes!'" the man exclaimed, more fervently.

Aymer repeated the word "Yes," and rose up; but the man had fallen at his feet, and there, bursting into tears, he poured forth thanks and blessings upon him.

"This is unmanly, perhaps," cried the poor prisoner, rising up, as Aymer moved towards the door, "but my heart seems all melted within me now. God bless you, my lord! you have done me a great kindness in coming; and now I shall feel satisfied that, when I am gone, no suspicion will ever fall upon another person; no innocent man will be accused as the murderer of your son.——"

It was past midnight, on the same evening when the interview of which I have just spoken took place at Newgate, that the Earl of Ravensbourne rose up from his bed. He had lain wide awake and restless for hours; he could lie no longer. His

ever watchful and tender wife was instantly at his side. She knew not the nature of the communication which had been made to him; but she suspected, from his look and manner, that he had suffered, and was suffering, deeply and dreadfully. "Whither are you going? what are you about to do?" she inquired, as he hastily threw on some of his clothes, preserving all the while a gloomy silence. He replied not—he noticed her not. She seized his arm, and, with a voice of decision and authority, repeated her questions, and bade him answer to them.

"I am going," he said at length, with a low, deep voice, fixing his eyes on her wildly, "to Newgate—to the gallows—to hell!" The pious and faithful wife had long been prepared for such a scene; she had expected a severe trial, and had prayed unceasingly for presence of mind, and wisdom, and power, to fulfil her duty.

"Tell me at once," she said, with a calm, quiet voice, and a searching and unshrinking look; "tell me the meaning of this phrenzied conduct? what have you done? what do you fear?"

"You will know in time," he muttered.

"If in time," she replied firmly, "why not now—at once? Nay, answer me; I will take no denial. O my dear husband! have at least some pity upon me, a long-tried friend, a faithful, loving wife. Do

not break my heart by this silence; you are all the world to me; nothing you can tell me could make me look unkindly upon you;—though, for my very anxiety about you now, you can frown so darkly upon me as you do. Dearest, kindest Aymer! husband of my youth! companion of my life!" she continued, falling down before him, and tenderly clasping his knees, as she looked up into his face; "need I repeat it: nothing you could tell me would close this heart against you. Were you a murderer, a guilty, blood-stained murderer, still I could clasp these dear hands as fondly as I do now! still I could—"

Aymer stooped down, ere she could say more, and at once whispered in her ear—"What, if I am a murderer? Constance! I confess I am one; I am the guilty, blood-stained murderer of my poor brother's only child!" He spoke slowly; the words seemed to escape reluctantly, against their will, from his lips. He expected that she would shrink from him, that her blood would be frozen and curdled with horror. She did drop his hands from hers, and she rose up, but only to throw herself on his bosom, to draw his arms more and more closely round her, and to weep there like a little child. "O my poor, wretched Constance!" he cried at length, "how is this? why do you not spurn me,

or fly from me, or curse me? for what else do I deserve? Why is not your heart broken? your kind, pious heart."

"Because," she said, gently disengaging herself from his arms, but still clinging to him, still regarding him with looks of the gentlest tenderness; "because, for years and years, I have never known such a moment of happiness as this! Because at last I see my prayers are accepted! you are no longer a hardened criminal. You knew it not, and, but for this confession, you had never known it: but on that horrid night, when you forgot even the eye of God then fixed upon you, then alas did these eyes behold your crime. Alas! you know not what I have suffered!—not when I saw you weep over the lifeless body of our own sweet child, but when I knew that guilt was forgotten, remorse slumbered, your conscience was seared, your God unheeded, that even the torments of hell were not dreaded!"

"But what a wondrous love has yours been ever since to me!" he said, his eyes fixed gloomily on the ground.

"What a natural love! you should say. Could any crime of yours make me forget your kindness, your unvaried gentleness, and affection to me?"

"But now," he said, suddenly raising his head—

"now what remains for me to do, but to give myself up to justice, to suffer willingly on the scaffold for my infamous crime?"

Constance did not make use of any wild and passionate entreaties: she said, gently, but firmly, "Believe me, my own husband! I am, I hope, above asking you, persuading you, to any conduct contrary to the will of God; and if I saw that the path of duty led you to the scaffold, thither would I go with you at once. Had the poor wretch whom you visited in prison been condemned as the murderer of your nephew, and could the sacrifice of your life have saved a guiltless man, I would have had you go and make, in public, full confession of your guilt; but it has been wisely arranged, that no confession of the robbery in Maidenhead thicket has been made by that man to any one but yourself; and certainly the judgment passed on him by the law was not from any knowledge of his supposed guilt in the murder of that hapless child. Leave the event of every thing in higher hands—even in the hands of Him who doomed not even Cain, the first murderer, to death. My husband! do you think I could bear to see you suddenly cut off, with your sins rather despaired of than repented over, when a season seems yet allowed for repentance, and faith, and prayer?"

"You speak of Cain," he said; "but would it

not be better to die at once, than to wander, a hardened and despairing wretch, as he did, over the earth?"

"You cannot know that he was never brought to repentance," she replied at once; "his last hours are involved in mystery to us: but who shall presume to say that you are doomed never to know the comfort that follows a true repentance? Is it not as impious to believe that God *will not* forgive a repentant sinner, as it is impious to expect he *will* forgive a bold and hardened sinner—one who goeth on still in his wickedness? Surely it is not your present miserable and contrite state that would call down upon you the display of his vengeance. It is when the wicked man is careless and forgetful of his guilt that the sentence comes forth from His presence, 'Thou shalt surely die!' but He is ever ready to say, as He did to the conscience-smitten David, when he cried out, 'I have sinned against the Lord!' 'The Lord hath put away thy sin—for when the wicked man turneth away from the wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive.'"

I have now told you all that I know of the history of the Earl of Ravensbourne. I can only

add, that the last peer of that once illustrious family is reported to have died at Florence in the early part of the reign of James the Second.

"We must really have some music to compose our spirits after this long and dismal story," exclaimed Lucy; "infinitely more dismal than my tale of 'Patience;' for there is not a pleasant ending, not my clear sunset after the day of clouds and storm. Thank you, dear Clarice; how sweetly those few tinkling chords sound as you just touch the instrument."

"And you should thank my brother," said aunt Amabel, "for he has put a noble log on the fire, and set the whole room in a glow of light and warmth. Well, dear Marmaduke! you must excuse me," she added, "but I must say, I do not admire these tales all about murder, and misery, and Newgate. They may be very fine, but one meets with enough that is melancholy in real life, without stepping into the world of imaginations to see some horrid tragedy performed there."

"Excellent theory, though somewhat threadbare, aunty," cried Harry Fairfax; "yet, indeed, it is not a little amusing to hear you talk so gravely of one's meeting with enough that is melancholy in real life, while your dear happy face and your

pretty little round figure bear ample testimony to the fact that you have known nothing, or next to nothing, of misery or 'carking care.'

"Really, Mister Henry," replied the lady, bridling, "you are presuming to speak of what you know but very little. Perhaps I have had my trials and my disappointments, such as young persons meet with, in my youth, as well as others. I would have you to know I have met with as pretty a share of delicate distresses as a maiden need meet with. Your manner of speaking is not as handsome as it might be, and the reflections you are pleased to cast upon my not having pined away, and fretted myself to a shadow, might have been spared. But I will say no more. You were always a pickle. You never treated me with half the respect shown by some persons. Come, pray don't reply. Indeed you must not go on talking in this way. There is your dear little wife waiting to begin her song: I am sure she would not have spoken in such an unhandsome manner—I beg you'll be silent. Known nothing of misery, indeed! more than many I could mention!"

A LOVER'S SONG.

You are very lovely, lady!
Soft and fair your skin;
Beauty's pencil has been there,
Blending colours fresh and rare;
Is all fair within?
Yes; that blush, with modest glow,
Sweetly tells what I would know.

You are very gentle, lady!
Humble and discreet.
Let not words of artless praise
Kindle anger in your gaze.
Praise is not unmeet,
When the lip of truth doth find
Language for th' approving mind.

You are very dear, sweet lady!
Will you hear my suit?
Honest is my love, and pure,
Lasting while my days endure;
Why are you so mute?
Ah! you smile, and blush, and sigh,
I do ask no more reply.

"And after the 'Lover's Song,'" said Grace,
"comes another, just put into my hand, by whom

I may not tell, called the 'Husband's Song.' Will you sing it, Clarice?"

"Oh! no, no, dear Gracey! pray, sing it yourself. Really," she continued, peeping over, and reading the few first words, "this is too serious a ditty, too near the truth, for an old married woman to sing."

THE HUSBAND'S SONG.

My gentle wife, believe me,
I never meant to grieve thee;
With that cruel scorn,
On thy red lip worn,
No longer, sweet! receive me.

Ah, no! you are not weeping,
Though your face still cover'd keeping,
For no tear-drops fall
Through your fingers small,
But one bright eye thence is peeping.

Still, still, this coldness wearing!
With each wayward humour veering!
Well, frown as you will,
I'll remember still
Your smiles, when nought was cheering.

Tears to mine eyes had started—
Seeming friends had departed—

Then, smiling and calm,
Thy sweetness was balm
To one nigh broken-hearted.

"And now," said Lady Clarice, when the song was ended, "now, Harry, let us hear your song. You have been idle hitherto; you have neither written, nor read, nor sung for our amusement."

"Come, Harry," said the knight, "I did not know before that you were a song-writer; but let us hear you, boy. I suppose you sing without music."

"'Tis a rude, old ditty," replied Harry, "and full of faults in the metre; but you shall hear it."

A CHRISTMAS SONG.

Come, help me to raise
Loud songs to the praise
Of good old English pleasures;
To the Christmas cheer,
And the foaming beer,
And the buttery's solid treasures;

To the stout sirloin,
And the rich spiced wine,
And the boar's head grimly staring;
To the frumenty,
And the hot mince-pie,
Which all folks were for sharing;

To the holly and bay,
In their green array,
Spread over the walls and dishes,
To the swinging sup
Of the wassail cup,
With its toasted healths and wishes.

To the honest bliss
Of the hearty kiss,
Where the mistletoe was swinging;
When the berry white
Was claimed by right,
On the pale green branches clinging;

When the warm blush came
From a guiltless shame,
And the lips, so bold in stealing,
Had never broke
The vows they spoke,
Of truth and manly feeling:

To the story told
By the gossip old,
O'er the embers dimly glowing;
While the pattering sleet
On the casement beat,
And the blast was hoarsely blowing.

To the tuneful wait
At the mansion gate,
Or the glad, sweet voices blending,
When the carol rose,
At the midnight's close,
To the sleeper's ear ascending.

To all pleasant ways,
In those ancient days,
When the good folks knew their station ;
When God was fear'd,
And the king revered,
By the hearts of a grateful nation :

When a father's will
Was sacred still,
As a law, by his children heeded ;
And none could brook
The mild, sweet look,
When a mother gently pleaded :

When the jest profane
Of the light and vain
With a smile was never greeted ;
And each smooth pretence,
By plain good sense,
With its true desert was treated.

CONCLUSION FOR THE PRESENT.

" A little farther onward."

" Do you remember my speaking of a picture, a portrait by Holbein, in the library? one that I admired particularly. I was about to tell you something of the history of the fair original, and I might have run on for some length of time about her descendants, had not an interruption occurred. I beg pardon of Grace for the word interruption, for her song it was that stopped my long story. I shall tell you something about that lady, though not exactly her story at present. That picture and the next to it, the lady's husband, came into the possession of the family of Old Court, with the knight's mother. They are the portraits of the first Lord B. and his wife, to whose great grandson a dukedom was granted in Charles the Second's reign.

" The mother of Sir Adam Fairfax was the only sister of the second Duke of B——, and brought her husband a large fortune. This nobleman went abroad in the year 1688, following the for-

tunes of the Stuarts. Sir Adam has never kept up any intercourse with that part of his family, and would have known little about them, except that the last duke, grandson to his mother's brother, was said to be residing near St. Germain's, had not a circumstance which I am about to mention occurred very recently.

"It was about half a year after our winter festivities: we were sitting at breakfast, and the letters were, as usual, brought in by old Robin. There was a letter for the knight from Marmaduke. I should have said that Marmaduke and Mrs. Fairfax were not at Old Court, but at Woodcote, their own home, and that Lady Clarice was staying with them. Harry Fairfax was in London, transacting some business there for his father. Only Grace, and aunt Amabel, and Sir Adam, with myself, (by-the-by, I've never told you any thing about myself) were at Old Court. We were sitting round the breakfast table, when a letter was brought for the knight, and one for Grace, and one for me—one for all but aunt Amabel, who, seeing how interested we were with our letters, took up the newspaper, and putting on her spectacles, was soon as intently occupied as any of us. She generally begins at the first page of the paper, and looks (I will not say reads) it regularly through. Suddenly she uttered an exclamation of surprise, and almost

dropped the paper; snatched it up again, and thrusting it into her niece's hands, she cried,

" ' Read that paragraph, Grace!—Very odd! very odd, indeed!—Do you not see which I mean, child? It begins, ' Suddenly at'—Yes; there it is!—' Suddenly, at—'

" ' Now I see where you mean, aunt,' replied Grace. ' Died suddenly, at St. Germain's, of his wounds, received in a duel with the well-known Captain S——, James Charles, fourth Duke of B——, Earl of Wilton, and Lord Altyre, in Scotland. The father and grandfather of this nobleman have been long known as devoted followers of the House of Stuart, and have been constantly attached to the court of St. Germain's. By the death of his Grace the dukedom is extinct, but the earldom of Wilton, which descends in the female line, with the large landed property in Norfolk and two adjoining counties, comes to Sir Adam Fairfax, of Old Court, in the county of Kent, now Earl of Wilton.'

" ' Strange news, indeed!' said the knight; or, as I suppose we should now say the earl, taking the paper out of his daughter's hands.

" The strange news, however, travelled very fast; for before his son Harry returned from London, as he did that day, with full confirmation of the intelligence, it had spread through the whole neigh-

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bourhood; and old Robin, as he waited at dinner that day, ('tis a servant's never-failing rule) lost no opportunity, I assure you, of saying 'My lord' to his master, and 'My lady' to the Lady Grace, as we must now call her."

"I seldom write letters," said aunt Amabel, a few days after, to her niece; "but, a day or two ago, I took the liberty of opening a correspondence with a very fine young man, an officer in the Guards. My dear Grace! what will you say to me?"

"Oh, aunt!" replied Grace, looking up from her work, and sighing and smiling at the same time, "you know that I also, sometimes, though very seldom, write to a very fine young man, an officer in the Guards."

"The very same, child!" said aunt Amabel carelessly.

"My dear aunt!" exclaimed Grace, with a grave and serious manner, "you do not mean that you have been writing to Mr. Seymour?"

"Indeed but I have, child, and I should not wonder if we soon see him here. I tell you what, Gracey," and she laid her hand on the arm of her niece, "Mr. Seymour and I are the best friends in the world. I promised him that I would lose no opportunity of doing him a service with

you. Now as for your writing to him on the subject with which I have filled my letter, it was out of the question; but old women need not be so scrupulous."

"But what was the subject of your letter?" asked Grace.

"If you cannot guess, I cannot help you, for you will not hear from me, Gracey."

"Oh, aunt Amabel! aunt Amabel! what have you done?"

"Now don't be affected, Gracey; 'tis not like you, no, nor like Clarice either now, for she is grown a good, sensible, young woman; and do not look so much shocked, and I will tell you what I have done: only that, which Mr. and Lady Grace Seymour will thank me for having done, as long as they live. Lady Grace!" she repeated, "you, Lady Grace! and my brother, the Earl of Wilton! I don't know now that I like all this changing; I can hardly believe it yet. I am sure if I had read of such an event in a novel, I should have blamed the author for making out such an improbability; but when the thing actually happens in real life, what is one to say? My brother tells me, for my comfort," she added, after relapsing into silence, and working very diligently for some minutes, "that Marmaduke must reside at Wilton Castle,

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in Norfolk He does not find himself young enough to leave Old Court; he means still to continue his residence here."

"Oh yes, aunt! I know he does," said Grace; "and our happy family party are to meet here again next Christmas."

I wonder if their annalist will be there also!—
Perhaps I may.

L'ENVOY.

A FEW words with you, my reader! before we part. If you do not think this little book the dullest in the world,—if you have found among its faults and follies (and I will not be slow to confess it has many) some few parts to praise, buy the book; that is, if you have only borrowed it: recommend it, if the copy you are reading be your own. I am not selfish in asking this favour, except it be selfish to seek an honest pleasure. I am not selfish, for I am in truth asking an alms of you for some elderly gentlewomen of blameless character, who have been brought very low, almost to want, by no indiscretion of their own. It would be an insult to them, in their altered fortunes, to publish their names; so I must ask you to believe me, that if the volume sells, my profits of the two first editions will be devoted to them.—I must not forget to say, that the stories of ‘Katherine Parr,’ and ‘The Savoyard Peasant,’ have appeared before, in a periodical work.

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